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THE
TRIBES OF THE CAUCASUS.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

SCHAMYL AND THE MURIDS.

BY

Freiherr
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PREFACE.



THE manuscript of the following Work has been kindly sent to me by Baron Haxthausen, since the publication of his larger work on Transcaucasia, to which it may be considered a supplement. The interest and importance attached to the present state of these countries induce me to translate and offer the book to the English Public. The Author's name and reputation are a sufficient introduction, and guarantee of the correctness of his statements. Whether the reader accepts, or dissents from, his views, he must acknowledge that they spring from the convictions of an enlightened observer, and a high-minded and conscientious writer.

J. E. TAYLOR.

London, September 25th, 1855.

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THE TRIBES OF THE CAUCASUS.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LEGENDS.—THE ARK.—LIMIT OF CIVILIZATION.—MOHAMMED'S PROPHECY.—GOG AND MAGOG.—STEPPE.—AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL RACES.

THE Caucasus, the highest mountain-range in the civilized world in ancient times, presents features of incalculable importance and interest, both internally and with relation to the history of mankind at large. More than ever perhaps at the present moment, when in the East the armed might of Russia and of the Western Allied Powers are engaged in a war of such momentous importance and extent, it is not improbable that these countries, of which we propose to treat in the following pages, may form a central point in the history of the world, on which may hang the destinies of the future,

pregnant with events and changes that may baffle all anticipation and conjecture.

In ancient times the tribes of Western Asia and Europe, dwelling at the foot of these mountains, looked up with wondering gaze to those snowy summits, never trodden by the foot of man, which, in their eyes, formed the limit of civilization, and beyond which dwelt those hordes of barbarians, without name or history, the Scythians and Hyperboreans.

With these mountains were naturally associated the oldest popular legends and mythes. When the race of the Divs and Jinns; which inhabited the world before the creation of man, alienated themselves from the Deity, they were banished to the Caucasus, where it is supposed they still dwell in their ice-palaces, under their king, the Padishah of the Jinns, who holds his court in the Elbrouz, "the resplendent, holy, blest mountain."

On the other hand, the Grecian mythology informs us, that when Prometheus stole the fire from heaven for man, Zeus, as a punishment, chained him to the rocks of the Caucasus.

Another legend, which still survives, relates that, when the Deluge abated, the Caucasus first

appeared above the waters: here the Ark first landed, on the highest summit of the Elbrouz, making a cleft in it which is still visible; but the story goes on to say, that the Ark again floated further, and finally landed on Ararat.

There is however another legend, of high importance, especially at the present time, as its belief exerts a mysterious and magical influence on the coming crisis of the world's history. We have said that the Caucasus was regarded as the limit of the ancient civilized world. The barbarous hordes of the North had, even within the times of history, repeatedly forced a way through this mountain barrier, and swept over the civilized countries with the sword of conquest. Against these irruptions the monarchs in early times erected an immense wall, with towers and two strong gates,—a defence similar to the great wall of China.

This well-known fact in history caused Mohammed to deliver a prophecy, which in the present moment contributes mainly to stir up all the Mohammedan races against the dwellers beyond and north of the Caucasus, and to inflame them with the most ardent fanaticism. Mohammed says in the Koran, "Beyond the Caucasus dwell

Gog and Magog : one day, when the full time is come, they will pass the mountains, and will slay the Faithful, and destroy the blest realm of the Believers.”*

Before considering specially the political and religious position of these countries at the present day, we shall first take a general survey of them and their inhabitants.

To the north of the Caucasus, between the

* The Bible makes mention of Magog in several places : first in Genesis x. 2, where the genealogy of the human race is given : Magog is there called the second son of Japheth. This genealogy is repeated in 1 Chron. i. 5. Ezekiel (38 and 39) foretells that Gog, the prince in the land of Magog, will come from the north, and subdue the land of the Lord ; but that there his grave will be prepared. Lastly the Revelations (xx. 7-9) prophesy that, after a dominion of a thousand years, Satan will gather Gog and Magog, numerous as the sands of the sea, and surround the camp of the saints, but that fire from heaven will destroy them.

The abode of Magog is supposed to be found in the country about the Palus Mæotica, which thence may take its name ; and the prophecy of Ezekiel has been referred to the great irruption of the Scythians through the Caucasus, B.C. 633, when they devastated Asia, and ruled it for twenty-eight years, and found their graves in Syria.

Mohammed seems to have taken his prophecy from Ezekiel and the Revelations ; but instead of foretelling, in accordance with the Bible, the final overthrow of Magog, he prophesied the destruction of the empire of the Faithful.

Black Sea, or its continuation the Sea of Azof, and the Caspian, and north of both, extends an immense barren Steppe, the greater part of which, between the Sea of Azof and the Caspian, is of a salt character. On digging but a few feet into the earth, salt water rises. Possibly we may trace on the map, from this circumstance, the junction of the two Seas in one, in præhistoric times, perhaps before the Deluge. These plains admit only of cultivation along the banks of the rivers, the rest being abandoned to the roving nomads and their herds.*

This Steppe forms only a portion of the vast plains which extend in an uninterrupted line from the Carpathian and Silesian mountains—we may even say from Normandy—to the China Sea, and may perhaps have been an immense ocean before the Deluge, separating that portion of the earth inhabited by the race of Adam from the northern zone.

Through all times of history these plains have been the heritage and country of nomadic peoples. From the very origin of the human race, in the story of Cain and Abel, we observe the two-

* “Nulla est silva, nulla mons, nullus lapis,” is the mournful expression of Ovid.

fold leading directions of man's life—agriculture, and pastoral occupation; and in a corresponding manner the formation of the earth itself presents, in its varied local features, the inducements which in general determine these directions. High mountains, and wide barren plains, are the natural basis of pastoral life, whilst the fertile central lands invite and foster the pursuits of agriculture.

We observe usually on the earth's surface these lines of demarcation everywhere running near to, and intersecting, one another,—fertile, arable soil, and pasture-land intermingled, both in large and small extent; nevertheless in parts immense tracts of country, thousands of square miles (as for instance in Arabia) are adapted by nature only for pasture.

Thus, whilst in all parts of the world, among its various inhabitants, we see one portion devoting themselves* to the labours of the field, and

* We expressly use the word *devote*: mankind is ruled in the choice of forms of life, by inner, deep and secret laws—laws of nature, but not of a fatalist nature. Man has the free exercise of his will, especially in those matters appertaining to his mode of life; but he is influenced by sympathy, feeling, and habits. Nations, like individuals, follow similar laws of choice and guidance. In Adam were united the basis of

the other to the occupations of pastoral life, this presents the significant fact, of one great section of mankind standing opposed in views and modes of life to another.

We differ from the opinion that the pastoral was the older or primitive mode of life, and that the social life connected with agriculture sprang from it: the two forms are equally old and original, ordained by God. As individuals, so likewise large bodies of men, have passed from one mode of life to the other. Shepherds and nomadic tribes have occasionally adopted a settled dwelling, whilst agricultural people have, although

both these forms of life, agricultural and pastoral; whilst in his sons Cain and Abel they were strikingly contrasted, even to a distinction in worship and sacrifice. The fundamental dualism of the human race was herein prefigured and instituted: thenceforth it was divided into the two classes of the husbandmen and nomads. Which is the nobler form, who can decide? If the higher outward forms of cultivation belong to the agricultural class, who can tell, on the other hand, those inner feelings, the effect of contemplation or of intuition, resulting from an intimate communion with nature, which the nomadic class peculiarly possess? At present the agricultural races occupy a higher position than the pastoral, for no nomadic people have hitherto embraced Christianity permanently. The herdsmen of the Alps are not properly a nomadic people; although their pursuits are pastoral, they have a settled mode of life: they form the transition between the two states.

more rarely, exchanged their pursuits for a nomadic life. Nevertheless the nomad races in general, as a body, have never abandoned their pastoral life,—not indeed because the soil they inhabited may have been wholly unfitted for tillage, but because the laws of nature have implanted in the spirit of these peoples an inalienable attachment to this mode of life, as of necessity. The Arabs and Mongols have been nomads for thousands of years, and will remain so to the end of the world: and the Turks, to the present day, have never been an agricultural people, but live, especially in Europe, as in the field or camp.

CHAPTER II.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES. — RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS. — NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY. — EXTENT AND POPULATION. — VARIETY OF RACES AND LANGUAGES, CIRCASSIAN, ABKHASIAN, OSSETIAN. — EASTERN AND SOUTHERN TRANS-CAUCASIA.

WE shall now return from our digression, the peculiar bearing of which will be explained hereafter, to the geographical position of the Caucasus, and the Asiatic countries beyond it. On the north, as we have remarked, extend those vast plains, traversed almost solely by nomadic tribes. Along the entire northern line of the Caucasus, a luxuriant vegetation appears, contrasting with this more northern salt Steppe. From the centre of the Caucasian range issue two large rivers, not far distant from one another, which soon take opposite directions. The Kouban (the Hypanis of the Ancients), rising at the foot of the Elbrouz, flows west into the Sea of Azof; and the Terek,

rising in Mount Kasbek, flows eastward, and empties into the Caspian Sea. Both rivers receive in their course a number of small tributaries, and run through extensive marshes, lined with impenetrable banks of tree-like reeds. The country in the foreground of the Caucasus, comprising its spurs, and the fluvial valleys from eighty to a hundred miles wide, is throughout fertile, but thinly peopled.

The entire length of the mountain-range, from the Black Sea, opposite to the Crimea, as far as Baku, may be about 750 miles. Rising steeply on the east, and descending gradually in the west, the mountains lie mostly in a direction north-west and south-east. They form two parallel chains, the southern one of which ("the Black Mountains") does not rise to the limit of the snow-line; whilst the northern range ("the White Mountains") rises everywhere from 10,000 to 14,000 feet above the level of the sea; some mountains, as the Elbrouz, attaining a height of more than 18,000 feet, and the Kasbek above 16,000. On the side open to the Steppes, the loftiest summits are visible at an immense distance, as far as Sarepta on the Volga, three hundred miles. The mountain-range consists of a

series of rounded summits with few intervals between them; whilst the line of glaciers, rising in the centre, forms an almost impassable and continuous line of wall with dentated summits, the acclivities being clothed, down to the valleys, with impervious forests. Numerous rapid mountain-streams wind through the narrow valleys, but there are no other rivers or lakes of any importance.*

The Caucasus forms the line of demarcation, separating Asia from Europe, and marking at the same time certain boundaries in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Here for instance is the limit of the countries where the jackal is found,

* It is necessary to be clearly acquainted with these natural features of the country, to understand correctly the political importance of the Caucasus, and the character of the present war in those parts. In confirmation of my own observations, I quote the description given by another traveller. "In the background of the Steppes rose in immeasurable rows the snowy giants of the Caucasus. Above the dark, wooded, projecting spurs, these snowy mountains stood forth, in the most fanciful forms,—like columns, horns, tops, and pyramids. Such rugged and steep walls of rock and snow, such bold summits, as the giants of the central range of the Caucasus exhibit, are to be found neither in the Alps of Switzerland, the Taurus, Mount Atlas, the Balkan, the Apennines, nor any other mountains in Europe." (*Der Caucasus*, by M. Wagener, 1848, p. 181.)

—an animal which is not seen even in the adjacent Crimea, nor on European soil, within the same latitude.

On the southern acclivity of the Caucasus lie the countries of Mingrelia, Georgia, and Gooria, richly gifted by nature. On the mountains is luxuriant pasture for cattle,—in the valleys, rich arable soil; with magnificent forests, where the southern laurel grows beside the noble beech of the north, interlaced everywhere with vines, which have become indigenous to the soil, the dwelling of every description of game, and the native *habitat* of the pheasant.

The eastern slopes and valleys are still grander and more beautiful. Who is a stranger to Shirvan, the theme of admiration to the Persian poets, the hallowed plains of the Koor (Cyrus) and Araxes, or again, the pasture-lands of Karabagh, which produced a race of horses scarcely inferior to the Arab? Thence the country rises to the Koordish and Anatolian Alps, from the centre of which the majestic Ararat steps forth, 16,000 feet in height, in solitary grandeur. Here also, in Armenia, the soil is remarkable for its fertility, from its artificial irrigation: the heights are bare, grey, and destitute of vegetation.

Russian Transcaucasia, and the independent mountain districts, may together perhaps somewhat exceed in extent the kingdom of Prussia, and be rather smaller than Great Britain and Ireland.* The free mountain territory forms the smaller half of the country; the total population is estimated at less than four millions. If to this be added Ciscaucasia, the cultivated plains, and those capable of cultivation, north of the Caucasus, as far as the vast Steppes, comprising the

* The following statistical account, if not precisely accurate, may suffice to afford general points of comparison.

Transcaucasia . 66,550 sq. miles, with 2,150,000 inhab.

The free Moun- tain districts }	46,560	„	„	1,550,000	„
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Ciscaucasia . .	56,080	„	„	620,000	„
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Total, 169,190 square miles, and 4,320,000 inhabitants.

Great Britain and Ireland }	120,562	sq. miles,	with	28,000,000	inhab.
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The Kingdom of Prussia . }	107,450	„	„	16,500,000	„
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Germany (with- out Prussia) }	95,500	„	„	17,000,000	„
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Sweden	170,000	„	„	3,200,000	„
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Spain	182,000	„	„	12,300,000	„
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Belgium	11,330	„	„	4,300,000	„
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In the Caucasian countries the population on the square mile is only about 25 or 26; whilst in Belgium it is 380, and in England 332; in Germany, 180; in Sweden, only about 19.

entire belt between the Black Sea and the Caspian, this country may be computed to contain from 150,000 to 170,000 square miles, with a population of four millions and a half.

There is no country, of the same extent, which comprises such a variety of races, differing in origin, physiognomy, character, religion, manners and dress, as this. Probably indeed this may have been still more the case in remote times: if the accounts given by ancient writers appear exaggerated, that in the market at Dioscurias on the Black Sea more than three hundred peoples met and traded, yet Strabo mentions twenty-six languages in the eastern Caucasus alone, in Albania, where the Lesghians now dwell. The Arabian writers Ibn-Haukal and Masudi mention seventy-two languages, which were said to be spoken in the east, about Derbent, a perfect Babel of tongues. Abulfeda calls the mountain of the Albanian Gate 'Djebel-il-Alason,' or 'Mountain of Tongues.' To the present day, the peoples comprised under the name of Lesghians, who have a great resemblance in manners and customs, speak thirty different languages.

The total number of languages spoken in these countries at the present day amounts to seventy ;

and, although it is improbable that these may all have been originally independent, it is remarkable that none of the inhabitants speaking them can understand the rest. Frequently four or five villages have a distinct language, wholly unintelligible to any other tribe. The following primitive languages, with their dialects, have a wider range.

1. The Circassian, a primitive language, said to belong to the Finnish stem, branches out into a number of dialects; thirty-two have been enumerated, each spoken by a distinct people. The sixteen Circassian tribes, properly so called, are estimated to comprise a population of rather above 500,000; the four Kabardian tribes number about 36,000 to 40,000; the twelve Abadian tribes, 110,000; making in all a population of about 700,000.

2. The Abkhasian is said to be a primitive language, its connection with any others being quite unknown. The Abkhasians are divided into five tribes, numbering together a population of from 45,000 to 50,000 souls.

3. The Ossetian language is of Persian derivation. In a former work, on Transcaucasia, we have given an account of this remarkable Iranian Germanic people. The Ossetes are divided into

sixteen tribes, scarcely numbering in all 40,000 souls: they are settled in the heart of the Caucasian mountains.

4. The eastern portion of the Caucasus is inhabited by a very mixed population, of small tribes, who speak languages which differ materially, but have not yet been sufficiently examined. It remains consequently uncertain which of them can be regarded as primitive languages, and which merely as dialects. About fifty-three tribes have been enumerated, among which the Tchetchens are divided into fourteen stems, numbering about 200,000 heads. The thirty-six tribes comprised under the general name of Lesghians, which, although perfectly alike in character, manners, and costume, speak the most different languages, comprise a population of about 500,000.

The eastern Caucasus is said to contain about 800,000 inhabitants, but we must observe that these statistics are only approximate; they may nevertheless serve to give a general idea of the political importance of this large extent of country.

The district south-east of the Caucasus, bordering the Caspian Sea, including about three hundred thousand square miles, and stretching to

the frontiers of Persia into the provinces of Daghestan, Shirvan, etc., is inhabited by Tatars, with here and there isolated settlements of other peoples,—Persians, Chinese, Hindoos, etc. : there are few traces of the original Medio-Iranian population, who appear to have been lost among the Tatars.* On the other hand, the Tatars are found also scattered in the eastern districts of the Georgian tribes, in Kakhetia, etc. Russian statistical tables state their numbers to be 709,600.

Whilst eastern Transcaucasia is inhabited by

* The Tatars appear in history a semi-mythical people: they are unquestionably the basis of the population of Turan, the “night-land,” the “night-people,” contrasted with the “light-land,” or Iran, of the legendary history of Persia,—a monarchy comprising many peoples, united by one and the same language. In modern history they appear a very powerful race, under two names,—as Tatars, accompanying the great expeditions of the Mongols, and as Turks, who were first in the pay of the Saracens, and afterwards their conquerors, and the founders of a powerful empire. In speaking of Tatars, we do not now understand the term to apply to any primitive race or nation, but rather an aggregate of peoples speaking the same language. The Nogai Tatars, for instance, are evidently of Mongol origin; whilst those Tatars who inhabit the country from Derbent to Persia are of Caucasian origin. The Turks perhaps belong originally to the Finnish race. The Tatar language is that of conversation in Western Asia, Persia, and Turkey, like the French in Europe.

the Tatar race, the whole of western Transcaucasia belongs to the Georgians. This nation occupies Georgia, Kakhetia, Imeretia, Mingrelia, Suanetia, and Gooria, with a population of 677,000 souls, on 35,000 square miles : of these perhaps not more than 600,000 belong to the Georgian race,—the rest being Tatars, Armenians, Turks, Koords, Russians, Germans, and Jews.

The southern portion of Transcaucasia, or Russian Armenia, 8200 square miles in extent, contains 164,500 inhabitants, including 110,000 Armenians, the rest being Tatars, Koords, etc. Beside these, the Armenians are scattered over all these countries : their total number is stated to be nearly 300,000.*

These are the principal nations inhabiting this large extent of country at the present day. Two of them only can boast a civilization and history which reach back many thousand years, as well as traditions which connect their origin directly with Holy Writ, and their genealogy with Noah

* Köppen, the best Russian statist, estimated (before 1838) the male population to be 679,497,—with a total of 1,500,000 souls. The Georgian male population was 182,431 ; the Tatars, 319,230 males ; the Armenians, 147,303 males. The above number did not include the Mingrelians, Suanetians, and Goorians.

and the patriarchs of the human race. These are the Armenians and Georgians, who embraced Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century, and at a very early time possessed a writing and literature of their own,—the Armenian especially rich. The other nations have no writing or records of their history, the only account of their origin being derived from tradition and mythical sources: in fact, it is highly probable (as our own observation would lead us to infer) that a mine of legendary lore remains among these peoples still unexplored.*

* See the works of Von Koch, Wagener, Bodenstedt, and other travellers. Dubois, in his great work on the Caucasian countries, has directed his attention to matters of natural history, more than to these ethnological subjects.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY HISTORY.—RACES.—COUNTRIES BORDERING THE CASPIAN SEA.—THE ANCIENT IRAN.—THE MAGI.—ZAL AND ROOSTEM.—FIRE-WORSHIP.—BAKU.—PETER I.—EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS.—ORMUZD.—ISLAMISM.—TIMUR.—RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT.—ROCK-CAVES.—TRADE OF THE EAST.—CHINESE COLONISTS.—SYMBOL OF THE DRAGON.—EUROPEAN FACTORIES ON THE CASPIAN.—ARMENIAN TRADERS.—DESCENDANTS OF THE TEN LOST TRIBES.—VARIETY OF TRADING NATIONS.—WESTERN CAUCASUS.—COLCHIS.—DIOSCURIAS.—GEORGIA.—THE IBERIANS.

At an early period these countries emerged from a mist of legendary history, and allusions to them are found in the oldest parts of the Bible. The ancient Persian legends and royal books speak of these countries, which are in a great measure the theatre of their principal national events. Here was the holy land of the Magi, the land likewise of the heroes Zal and Roostem. In Grecian mythology western Caucasia

was the scene of the Argonautic Expedition. Herodotus was acquainted with these countries, but there is a want of clearness in his descriptions of them, which is found also in almost all subsequent authors ; in fact a veil of obscurity shrouds this portion of the earth's surface.

It is a remarkable fact that the names of scarcely any of the peoples mentioned by the ancients exist at the present day. The Armenians are the only nation who appear here in the records of all ages. The Georgians seem to be the Iberians ; the Lesghians, the Albanians (inhabitants of the Caucasian Alps).* The Circassians are probably the Zicchi of the ancients.

In the remotest ages, before history and mythe were distinguished, the eastern countries along the Caspian Sea possessed great historical importance. Here was the cradle of the Persian monarchy, the true Iran in its limited sense ; for the name afterwards extended to all Persia. Here was the country, the scene of their actions, of the heroic race of Persia, of Zal and Roostem ; and even in the times of Peter I., the exploits of

* See Ritter's *Erdkunde*. No writer gives a more admirable and detailed account of the ethnographical, historical, and geographical features of these countries than Ritter.

the Shah Nameh were still handed down in the popular songs of the country. Probably a diligent research might still discover traces of them there.*

In the midst of this land of heroes, Iran proper, lay the holy land of Mugon,† the country of the Median Magi. The soil is remarkably fertile; Strabo says that a wooden plough only was required for its tillage, and that one sowing sufficed to yield two or three harvests.

This hallowed and favoured country of the Magi was the cradle of the worship of Ormuzd,

* Peter I. despatched several small expeditions from the Caspian Sea to explore these shores. In 1720, a vessel anchored at the mouth of the Koor: the captain and crew were hospitably received by the prince, or Beg, of the country. On their departure he gave them an entertainment, at which popular songs were sung, reciting the praises of the great Shah Khosru Anushirvan the Just. The Beg then pronounced an encomium on the Emperor Peter, adding these words, so prophetic for Russia, "Every seed brings forth its fruit in its own time." In this country, below Derbent, lies the city of Shah-berain (now Shabran), which is frequently mentioned in the Shah Nameh. The songs of Roostem tell of the river Didjelat (Araxes), where was the cavern in which the king and hero of Turan, Afrasiat, imprisoned the pious king Bidgiam, and closed the cave with a rock, whom Roostem liberated.

† The present desert of Mogan recalls the name.

of that religion which ranked next to the true, primitive, and traditional religion of mankind, preserved and transmitted, although veiled, in Judaism, until God revealed Himself to the world in Christ. Here were the eternal and holy fires at Baku,* which issued from the ground in flames spontaneously, as it were the antitype of Mithras, the Sun, the symbol of Ormuzd. But mankind early fell off from this simple form of religion; the symbol was converted into an idol, a carved image to which worship was addressed.

* The sacred fires at Baku, of which we have given an account in a former work on Transcaucasia, present one of the most wonderful spectacles in the world. After warm autumnal rains, the fires are visible in the evening, when in a short time all the fields around Baku, as far as the eye can reach, are covered with white flames. At times these flames roll in the distance down from the hills in broad masses; but they are only meteoric, without heat or the power of inflaming. In a clear night these fires are seen playing on the plains, whilst the hills rise above them in dark forms. One while the flames move singly, at another they unite, waving to and fro with a continual movement, like spectral forms. At about four o'clock in the morning they disappear. In clear autumnal nights the plain is dark, but the summits of the hills are covered with an astonishing blue fire, particularly the sacred mountain Soghda-Ku—the Mountain of Paradise, in the time of Ormuzd. See Reineggs' *Kaukasus*, i. 155, and Ritter ii. 889. It is remarkable that the ancients never mention the fires of Baku.

Mithras, or Lucifer, the later demiurgus, the morning-star which ushers on the Sun and dispels the night, became an idol; but afterwards, in this same country of Iran, Zoroaster was born, who combated this idol-worship, and restored the pure doctrines of Ormuzd.

Subsequently, however, after Alexander's time, when the Parthians established a new Partho-Persian kingdom, the old religion was obscured, idolatry spread, and led even to the deification of man. The Parthian dynasty of the Arsacides asserted their descent from Ormuzd and Mithras (Mithridates), called themselves "Frates Solis et Lunæ," and claimed divine honours. Pompey indeed carried the worship of Mithras to Rome;* and there are still traces of its having spread thence over the Alps into Carinthia, Salzburg, and the north of Europe.

The Persian religious element however in time prevailed over the Parthian. The Sassanides succeeded to the throne, and the great Shah Khosru Anushirvan restored the worship of Ormuzd. At length arose Islamism, which gradually supplanted the latter. Timur invaded and

* The Christian episcopal *mitre* may be a faint trace of the Mithras worship.

conquered the country, uniting the original innate hatred of the Turanians against Iran, with Mohammedan fanaticism. He resolved to extirpate the sacred Iranians, the Ghebers; the Iranian population, in consequence, nearly all perished, and their place was filled by the Tatars, who still occupy the country. The fire-worship however partially revived after Timur's death; and thousands of pilgrims from the mountains of Persia and Hindostan (whither the Ghebers had fled) resorted to the sacred fires at Baku, to perform their devotions. The Mohammedan Shahs of Persia treated them as enemies, and under the reign of Shah Abbas they underwent a general persecution; only a few pilgrims succeeding, variously disguised, in reaching the holy places, where they secretly performed their devotions. Under the government of Russia all persecution has ceased: the pilgrims are protected, and some wealthy merchants of the race of the Ghebers, in Astrakhan, have erected the remarkable temple we have elsewhere described,* Atesh-Dja, with houses of entertainment for the anchorites and pilgrims. From year to year the number of these anchorites diminishes; there rarely arrive

* See 'Transcaucasia,' page 441.

fresh pilgrims from India, and the race appears drawing toward extinction.*

Beside the heroic nation of the Iranians, with their mythes and traditions, we meet here likewise the sacred nation of the Medes, with the priestly tribe of the Magi ; whilst under the protection of heroes and priests, a peaceable mercantile people gradually sprang up. The position of these countries on the earth's surface constituted them a natural mart for the exchange of commodities between Europe and Asia ; and such they have been in all times of tranquillity, when the land has been free from the inroads of barbarians.† It is remarkable that the aborigi-

* Throughout these countries are everywhere found hewn rocks, artificial caverns, and inscriptions. The strangest and most remarkable occur on the east spurs of the Caucasus. Here rises Mount Besh-Barmak, the Five-finger Mountain—the Priest-Mountain (Barmek, the high-priest of the Magi). This mountain resembles an immense castle of fairyland, built by giants, full of caverns, rock-chambers and steps, platforms, niches, graves, and inscriptions in various languages. High up is a spring, a resort for pilgrims, even from a great distance ; it is likewise an abode of predatory Tatars. (Ritter, ii. 872.)

† Before the birth of Christ no Asiatic monarch had turned his arms against this hallowed land. Cyrus warred with the Scythians on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, and Darius attacked them from the European side. Here was the centre of the high-road of commerce between Asia and

nal inhabitants, the Iranians and Medes, whose national tastes were averse to commercial enterprise, were not the introducers of this trading spirit into these countries, but a race of foreigners, an Indo-Chinese (Indo-Serie) people, who, driven from their distant homes in the south-west of China, were received and settled here. Herodotus points out the existence of Indo-Serie colonies. Xenophon gives an account of Gymnias on the Araxes as an eastern colony, more than 400 B.C. Mar Ibas, in his chronicle, states that the sons of Indian princes sought and received protection from the Armenian Arsacides, B.C. 145, and founded a city on the Moschic plains, Visha-Bakaghak, or City of the Dragon, a dragon being everywhere set up as an idol.*

Europe; and for many centuries it remained undisturbed by war. Although Alexander's name figures in all the legends connected with this country, he was never there. Pompey was the first who invaded it with a hostile army. Moham-
medanism destroyed the link of tradition with former ages: it persecuted the religion of Ormuzd, and annihilated the sanctity attached to this country and its inhabitants. Timur, Shah Abbas, and Nadir Shah laid waste the land.

* The Dragon is the symbol of the Chinese Fo or Buddha, and is still the imperial arms of China. Arms, and figures upon, the standards had almost always in ancient times a religious meaning. The Griffin (allied to the Dragon) is, ac-

to the Caucasian markets, for barter with the Europeans. Hither also, in the Middle Ages, the Venetians, and afterwards the Genoese, resorted, to procure the celebrated manufactures of the East; and the mention of India and her costly products by the German and French Minnesingers, always refers to the countries on the western shore of the Caspian Sea.* As early as the sixteenth century the English had factories here, and Queen Elizabeth in 1561 sent Jenkinson ambassador to Shirvan. Hamburg merchants also sought to establish connections with this country: Olearius describes their journey thither in 1636. The Russians too had a trading intercourse here; in 1712 they settled in Shemaki, and experienced great losses when this city was plundered by the Lesghians. Peter I. made an expedition to avenge this incursion, defeated the Lesghians, and conquered the whole country: the Turks however took Shemaki from him in 1722: but Nadir Shah afterwards re-took it from the Turks, destroyed the city, and in 1734

* The Apostle Bartholomew introduced Christianity into these parts,—India Interior (opposed to India Orientalis), as St. Matthew did into the north of Asia Minor. (Ritter, ii. 930.)

founded a new bazaar and city at a short distance from the site of the former one.

This Indo-Chinese race was nearly annihilated by Timur, in a spirit of Mohammedan fanaticism, and their place was in the course of time filled by the Armenians, likewise a trading people, who have by degrees spread far and wide in the East, and have at the present day the chief part of the trade with the interior of Asia in their hands. These pursuits have brought them into close connection and intercourse with the so-called ancient or Black Jews, scattered over the interior of Asia from China to the Caspian Sea; but their chief seat is at Bokhara, where they reside in great numbers, having a mysterious political organization under native princes. There is hardly any doubt of their being descendants of the Ten lost Tribes.*

Whilst these districts in Eastern Caucasasia were the great depôts for the wares from Asia, and the chief trade was in the hands of these industrious

* Benjamin of Tudela, in 1175, was informed in Persia, that on the high plains of Nishon, twenty-eight days' journey from Samarkand, in a territory covered with castles and towns, there dwelt an independent Jewish people, of the Tribes of Dan, Zebulon, Asher, and Naphthali, under a Prince Joseph Amarca, a Levite. (Ritter, ii. 487.)

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and peaceable Sero-Indian colonists, we find in the West Caucasian or Colchian districts a corresponding commercial system, carried on in the same manner by a colony of foreigners, who had been settled there from time immemorial. From those eastern depôts the wares destined for Europe were carried to the western trading-places and harbours, the centre of which was the celebrated Dioscurias (probably the little harbour of Sukhum Kalé). In the time of Mithridates, Strabo says, seventy peoples met here for trade; and the traffic in Indian and Bactrian wares, precious stones, and costly stuffs, brought great wealth to the kingdoms of Prusias, Attalus, and Mithridates. In Pliny's time all this country was laid waste; nevertheless he relates that, at the commencement of the Roman dominion, the enormous trade carried on here required 130 interpreters among these various peoples. The Romans partially abandoned this original channel of the trade with Asia, and diverted it into another course, by Alexandria and the Red Sea.

After the destruction of Dioscurias, the market of the Asiatic bartering trade was removed further into the interior, toward Georgia, where, especially in the valley of the Koor, between Tiflis

and Erivan, the trade revived. In the seventh century it again perished; and the Eastern trade only survived in Shemaki, as long as the Sassanides protected the followers of Ormuzd, the Ghebers. When the latter were persecuted by the Mohammedans, the trade moved north, toward the Volga, into the kingdom of Khozar, which flourished again in consequence.

In the centre of the Colchian district Herodotus places the Saspies, who served in the hosts of Xerxes; they are probably identical with the later Iberians and the present Georgians.* Nothing certain is known of their origin: Ritter is of opinion that they also might have been Indo-Chinese immigrants. The word Tchín occurs repeatedly in the names of places, as Tchín-Kartnet, Tchín-Val, etc. Strabo says that the Iberians also were divided into four castes; from the first was chosen the king, according to age, the next in age being appointed judge and general; from the second class were

* The name Georgia occurs in Pompeius Mela, according to whom it signifies agriculture,—perhaps in connection with the rivers Koor, Koorgi, Gurgi, Koorgestan. In subsequent Christian times its derivation was attributed to the name of St. George. The Georgians are indeed the chivalrous people of the Caucasian countries.

chosen the priests, who kept peace with the neighbouring peoples; of the third class were the warriors; and the fourth were servants and slaves. There was a community of goods in families, the oldest administering the property. This certainly points to an early connection with India. Even at the present day the Georgians are divided into four classes,—the princes, clergy, nobles, and peasants or serfs; the king (Czar) is the eldest member of the race of the Bagratides, and the eldest of the second noble race (the Princes Orbellian) is hereditary crown-field-marshal of the kingdom.

CHAPTER IV.

IMPORTANCE OF THESE COUNTRIES.—WARS OF PERSIA AND
 TURKEY.—DECLINE OF MOHAMMEDANISM.—PROGRESS OF
 RUSSIA.—HER DIPLOMATIC SKILL.—MILITARY FRONTIER.—
 OBSTACLES TO RUSSIA'S DESIGNS.—POSITION OF ENGLAND.
 —CIRCASSIANS.—CONJECTURES ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

THE sketch we have given in the foregoing pages will show the importance which these countries have for centuries possessed, in a religious, political, and commercial point of view. It was not until the Turks had completely conquered the Byzantine kingdom, and the two Mohammedan empires of Turkey and Persia became consolidated, that they began to recognize the value of the possession of this country. They first overthrew the power of the two Christian kingdoms, which had arisen here since the fourth century,—Armenia and Georgia. But, as in early times Persians and Greeks, so likewise after this conquest Persians and Turks, fought

upon this soil, knowing well that whatever Power had the absolute command of this belt of country, would be master also of the whole of western Asia. The two nations held the balance of power nearly poised for centuries; Eastern Transcaucasia being attached to Persia, and Western Transcaucasia being under Turkey. The country however sank gradually under these governments into barbarism and ruin.

Mohammedanism has, in the course of centuries, undergone gradual dissolution, and its mission in the world appears drawing to a close; the Mohammedan nations have by degrees lost all moral weight, in proportion as they have sunk into enervating sensuality; even the martial energy of the people has given way, and their military discipline steadily declined. There remains scarcely any perceptible trace of an intellectual or scientific spirit, such as was early developed among the Arabians. In short, the Christian nations have in every respect gradually gained a vast superiority over the Mohammedans.

Whilst the Turks and Persians were either struggling for the possession of the Caucasian countries, or keeping one another jealously in check, a great political Power in the North had

made rapid progress, which was for more than a century engaged in war with the two Mohammedan nations, in these and other countries. Russia has shown equally her skill and power in diplomacy and in the field. Following the political axiom, "Divide et impera," she has uniformly succeeded in preventing the union of the two great Mohammedan Powers. Whenever she has been at war with one, she has maintained friendly relations with the other; while the senseless antipathy and jealousy of Persia and Turkey is so rooted, and their political foresight so small, that, notwithstanding all the bitter lessons of long experience, at this very moment Russia is waging a war with Turkey, and is at the same time at peace with Persia, nay, has almost found an ally in the latter nation.

Russia has partly forced her way through the Caucasus, partly encompassed it; advancing by slow degrees, and acting with moderation, she has succeeded in obtaining possession of the whole of these countries. By the last treaty of peace with Persia and Turkey, she gained an extremely advantageous and secure military frontier along the heights of the mountain-range, which, but for natural obstacles, would lay Persia

as well as Asiatic Turkey defenceless, and entirely in the power of a sufficiently large Russian army.

Two obstacles indeed there are, and only two, to this advance of Russia,—England and the Mountain races of the Caucasus. But for these impediments, Russia would unquestionably be able, by a great effort, to advance her frontiers to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The other countries of Europe might stand by and bear to witness such aggression on the part of Russia; indeed it might in certain respects bring advantage to some of them, as the position of western Russia would be considerably changed, by the diversion of so important a power from that portion of the empire toward the south and east. But England, for her own security and self-defence, must of right and of necessity carry on the war to the knife; for the question at issue involves the security of her possessions in the East Indies; this momentous question fills the background of the picture. We have mentioned a second barrier to the advance of Russia southward,—the Mountaineers of the Caucasus; for half a century they have fought for the freedom of their hearths and homes; and who can regard

without interest and admiration the heroic struggle they have maintained?

At the present moment we may probably be entering on a great political crisis in the world's history,—one which may entail an entire change in all the political and social relations of Asia. The war for the conquest and possession of the Caucasian provinces will probably decide, whether this change will be effected rapidly by external causes, or gradually by internal development. Such events as are now passing give rise to many great questions, inviting speculation as to their probable solution; but the ways of Providence are often inscrutable to our weak sight, and the issues of the future are lost in obscurity.

If England can succeed in rekindling the fanatical zeal of Islamism, now almost expiring,—in raising the standard of the Faith, in the person of Schamyl and the principles of Muridism,—in effecting the union of Sunnites and Shiites, Turks and Persians,—if a large English army were to advance from the East Indies and cross the Persian Gulf, whilst a French army landing in Asia Minor were to appear simultaneously on the theatre of war, forming a nucleus for the military

organization of the undisciplined Mohammedan masses,—Russia would unquestionably be placed in a very perilous position. But the question is beset with difficulties of extraordinary moment. It is not an easy matter to plant, to form, and to maintain a European army there.

On the other hand, supposing the Russians to come off conquerors, and to compel the remains of the European armies to evacuate the country, what power could in such a case arrest their victorious advance? Unchecked, they would take possession of the entire countries as far as the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean; and, for her own defence, and security against any renewed attack on that side, Russia would be compelled to annihilate the two great Mohammedan Powers; in which event possibly some temporary satrapies, as Khiva and Bokhara, might be formed. But Russia, once planted on the Mediterranean, would rule Egypt with an iron hand. This indeed would be the knell of England's power.

Again, assuming the reverse of this picture, and that the armies of the Western Powers, aided by the fanatical spirit of Islamism, were finally to conquer, and succeed in driving back the Russians over the Caucasus,—what then? The em-

barrassment in reality would only begin. What is then to be the fate of the Caucasian countries? Can it be imagined that these Christian lands, after having been freed from the Mohammedan yoke for half a century, and placed under a Christian government, should be again subjected to the miserable rule of Persia and Turkey, and given up to the cruelty and extortion of Pashas and Sirdars?

But let us suppose Persia and Turkey to be momentarily reanimated. Are new kingdoms to be erected,—for instance, a Christian Georgio-Armenian one, with other Mohammedan kingdoms, according to their nationalities, Koordish, Chaldæo-Syrian, Persian, and Tatar? These would indeed be very feeble powers. There exists no national feeling or bond, no common historical tie, among these races, although they speak the same language; and, wanting these, any such combinations would inevitably result in anarchy, as soon as the European Powers had withdrawn their control. The only Christian nation which is really capable of a social organization, Armenia, is too weak to assume an independent political position: it would at once re-unite with Russia, with which country it has deep-rooted political and religious

sympathies and relations. As soon as any disturbance or embarrassment in Europe and America were to check the power and energy of France and England, all these countries would again be thrown into the arms of Russia. It is not improbable that the Western Powers, shrinking before such momentous consequences, will abstain from entering upon this new theatre of war, or setting the avalanche in motion, which it would be impossible to arrest in its course. Russia, on her side, clearly shrinks from pushing these fearful questions to an issue. She carried on the war very feebly in 1854, remaining on the defensive, and making little use even of the victories she obtained. The Western Powers likewise may be averse to drive Russia into a more serious war, seeing that, even in the event of her entire defeat, such victory could only displace her for the moment from her present advantageous position. Should however the storm which is gathering be for a time averted, it can be only for a short time. The life and vigour of the Mohammedan nations Persia and Turkey is almost extinct, and where is the power to resuscitate them?

The vast importance of these Caucasian countries can only be estimated by an investigation

into their history through past ages ; whilst at the same time the circumstances of the present, and the probable issues of the future, raise the importance of their position, as connected with the great questions touching the reorganization of the East, the dissolution of Mohammedanism, and the probably not very distant triumph and spread of Christianity in the East.

CHAPTER V.

ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN.—LEGEND OF IRAN AND TURAN.—DULKARNEIN.—GREAT WALL OF THE CAUCASUS.—ROMANS AND PERSIANS.—KHOSRU ANUSHIRVAN.—CITY OF DERBENT.

THE history of all ages, even from the earliest mythical times, exhibits the general existence of a leading and firm conviction, that the mountains of the Caucasus constituted the natural barrier and surest defence against the irruption of the Northern hordes into the civilized countries of Western and Central Asia,—the seats of the great monarchies of antiquity. A brief review of the past will show the absolute necessity for the great Southern Powers to hold possession of the countries south of the Caucasus.

The oldest religious belief of the Persians rests upon a principle of dualism. From the first Being proceeded Ormuzd, the principle of Good ; and afterwards sprang from the same source Ahriman, the principle of Evil. These principles

were in perpetual opposition in the universe, which in the material world was seen in a struggle of light with darkness. The earth and mankind, according to the Iranian or ancient Persian mythe, were divided between Ormuzd and Ahriman: the sun-land, or land of the South, belonged to Ormuzd, together with the good, the noble, the pious inhabitants of the South. These were comprised in Iran, and the Iranian race under their monarch, to whom all other peoples and kings were considered vassals. On the contrary, the dark land of night, the North, Mongolia, Tartary and Scythia, belonged to Ahriman, to whom were attached the barbarian and bad races. The Night-land and its inhabitants likewise formed a kingdom—Turan—the opposite of Iran. This incessant struggle of the empires of light and darkness, of Iran and Turan, gave rise to that marvellous mythical history, handed down in the national annals, and cut in cuneiform characters on the rocks throughout Persia; from it sprang the grand epos of the Shah Nameh of Firdousi.

The legend runs thus. After a long contest between Turan and Iran, a king at last mounted the throne of Iran, the most pious and powerful monarch that ever lived: this was Dulkarnein.

He subjected Turan, and ruled the world for many years in peace and happiness. In order to separate for ever Turan from Iran, this monarch caused an enormous wall to be built from one end of the world to the other, the remains of which are still to be seen in parts, from the China Sea, across the north of Persia, along the Caucasus, and which had even in Europe extended to the Pillars of Hercules.*

This Eastern legend, which we find in these various parts of the world, became localized in

* This legend, of a wise and powerful king, who ruled in the remotest times, and to whom all the greatest works, including these world-encompassing walls, were attributed, did not belong exclusively to the Iranians: it was common to the other Asiatic peoples. The Tyrians named him Malek-art-is (King of the Earth), the Tyrian Hercules of the Greeks. By the Hindoos he is called K-art-ikea (the Great Hero): by the Egyptians, Artes (the Strong). He is the Mars of the Romans, the Ares of the Greeks and Scythians (Ritter, ii. 838). This world-wide monarch also set the boundary pillars of the kingdom of Light, in the east, in the west, and in the centre, —in the east, in further India, under the name of the Indian Dionysos; in the west, under the name of Hercules, the Pillars of Hercules; in the centre, the Ara or Columna Alexandri, mentioned by Ptolemy, north of the Caucasus, toward the Tanais. It is certain that Alexander was never in that part of the world, and his connection with the story is legendary. Derbent was also considered to lie in the centre of the world's boundaries, the Porta Portarum (Gate of Gates).

the Caucasian countries,—a process which is common in popular tradition, as for instance in the remains of antiquity in the north of Germany, which the annalists of the Middle Ages attribute to the Romans, and to Charlemagne and his Franks, and which are assigned at the present day by popular story to the Swedes in the Thirty Years' War. In the Caucasian countries Dulkarnein is identified with Alexander the Great; and the erection of the great wall there, together with every object of wonder, are attributed to "Iskander," although it is notorious that Alexander was never there.*

Thus far the legendary and mythical accounts.

* The Koran adheres to the oldest and primitive legend: it does not regard the infidel Alexander as the rightful monarch, but the true believer the Persian Shah, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca with Abraham. Dul-k-ar-nein means "Man with two Horns," which seems to allude to the Egyptian Jupiter Ammon, and the oldest monarchs, the Egyptian Alexander, Sesostris, who indeed penetrated into the Caucasus. The story of the Macedonian Alexander being the offspring of a god, Jupiter Ammon or the Indian Dionysos, which is found in various forms throughout the East, has undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of this stranger there: the notion that the divinity of his birth gave him a right to the monarchy of the world may have tended to spread his celebrity: it is certain that he had a belief in possessing a high descent and authority.

Before passing to the period of history, we will briefly consider the existing remains of these lines of defence and fortification, and the conjectures which have arisen respecting them from accurate accounts or the actual state of their ruins.

The remains of these walls in the Caucasus* show clearly that they never formed one continuous wall, like that of China. The character of the country rendered such an unbroken line of defence quite unnecessary, and perhaps impossible. Most of the steep summits of the Caucasus are nearly impassable for single pedestrians, and entirely so for armed and mounted troops. It was needful therefore merely to close the defiles among the mountains by walls and gates. Whether the common tradition is true, that the wall was continued from one Sea to the other, has not been sufficiently examined and determined: we can only judge by the remains of walls and gates in certain narrow mountain-passes, together with occasional longer, continuous, ruined walls.

Starting from the Black Sea, remains of this

* The author has not himself visited those parts of the country where traces of these walls exist: he follows, in this account the statements of credible writers, as Von Ritter, Dubois, and others.

wall are found north of Mingrelia in various parts, for a length of ninety miles. Then occasionally are found valleys and passes which have been closed by walls,* in the country of the Valgires on the Arredon, of the Sakhas on the Flog, and in a valley of the Taganri. We now come to the celebrated Pass of Dariel and Vladikaukas, which is fortified quite in a modern manner, and is said to have scarcely any trace of the old walls and gates remaining. In the country of the Ingushes are found, on the Shalgier, the mural remains of Vapila.

On the southern acclivity of the Shah Dag, on the river Alazan, is the chief pass, of the Albanian Gate. The traveller Reineggs found still existing here in the eighteenth century the remains of a wall, in tolerable preservation, nearly ninety miles long and in parts 120 feet high. These vast remains are connected with others, which close the entire line of the Caucasian Wall on the Caspian Sea near Derbent. The wall still extends five miles in tolerable preservation.

The erection of these walls, and the causes which led to it, are simply matters of specula-

* A map by General Von Khatof is said to indicate clearly the line of these great walls.

tion as they undoubtedly existed in præhistoric times ; they have from age to age however been extended and restored, according to the necessity of political circumstances. Some writers are of opinion that, after the Scythians had penetrated into Asia through the Pass at Derbent, laying waste the country, and had retired again after a dominion of twenty-eight years, this incursion naturally induced the inhabitants to construct these walls, and close the passes as securely as possible,—a conjecture which appears not improbable, although it has no historical confirmation.

The Georgian chronicles mention Ardam, the governor of the Persian Shah Aphridun (Feridun), as the first builder of the walls ; others attribute them to Xerxes Isphandiar. No mention is made by the Greek and Roman writers before the Christian era of the continuous wall. It was not until after Pompey (B.C. 66) invaded the peaceful countries of the Caucasus, that the walls became by degrees known to Europe. Strabo first relates the existence of the central chief pass, called the Caucasian Gate, Pylæ Caucasix, which was at that time closed by walls and gates. Pliny conversed with persons who had seen them, and

speaks of them as a miracle of nature, whose gates were closed with iron bars. Procopius describes the Pass minutely, and dwells on its military importance : he says, that all the other passes of the Caucasus could only be crossed by pedestrians, but that this was passable by horsemen and carriages, and that through this opening the equestrian tribes of Sarmatia, the Avars, Aorses, Chozars, etc., could penetrate into Iberia, and fall upon the Romans in the west, and on the Persians in the east.

As the western Caucasian countries belonged to the Romans, and the eastern lands to the Persians, this Pass was naturally disputed by both Powers ; in the wars which ensued, each conquered in turn. The Persian Shah Kobad obtained possession of these countries. When his son Khosru Anushirvan concluded peace in 563 with the Emperor Justinian, these two great monarchs, both of whom in all boundary questions exhibited the deepest political insight, agreed that this was not a point on which their interests and policy clashed, but that the necessity of their position rather gave them a common interest in holding and defending this narrow Pass against the barbarous hordes of Sarmatia. They there-

fore agreed that the Pass should remain open to the eastern and western nations, and that whichever Power was entrusted with its defence should receive from the other 1,100,000 pieces of gold, towards the cost of its maintenance.

The Sassanidan Shah Kobad and his son Khosru Anushirvan, in whom were reawakened all the sympathies and traditions of the ancient Persian Shahs, restored the pure doctrines of Ormuzd. They regarded with peculiar love and veneration the hallowed land of the Iranians, of the Magi and the sacred fire, the country of Zoroaster, and the great race of heroes from which had sprung Zal and Roostem. The Shah Kobad wished to convert the whole country into a garden of Paradise, encompassed by a wall: he erected Baku, and commenced the restoration of the Caucasian wall.* His son Khosru Anushirvan completed the work, and founded the city of Derbent† at

* The erection of such a wall, encompassing and protecting the kingdom against the invasions of Barbarians, belonged to the spirit and ideas of that time. The Emperor Justinian sought in like manner protection from the irruptions of the northern Barbarians by walls and ramparts (Valles Trajani, etc.).

† There occurs no earlier mention of this city; if there had been any town there previously, Khosru at least rebuilt it and surrounded it with walls.

the Eastern Pass (Porta Caspia), on the Caspian Sea.

The Persian historical sources of that time are deficient, or have not been sufficiently investigated; and we are indebted for most of our information respecting these remains to the Arabian writers Ibn Haukal, Masudi, Edrisi, etc. The country was already under Mohammedan rulers, who accepted the legends and traditions respecting the Caucasian walls, but considered them as a protection against Gog and Magog of the Bible and the Koran, instead of the Turanians, the followers of Ahriman, the Divs and Jinns. Derbent was sacred in their eyes, from the circumstance that Mohammed had called this city "the Gate of Faith." The Mohammedan rulers added much to the place, and it is consequently difficult to distinguish what they built, and the part originally belonging to the Sassanides.*

* The name of the city is different in various nations. The Persians and Armenians call it Derbent, from *der*, *dar*, *dur* (Door), and *bent* signifies narrow,—*i. e.* 'narrow gate.' Among the Turks we find the name Demir-Capi, *i. e.* Iron Gate. Among the Arabians, Bab-el-Abwabi, *i. e.* Gate of the Gates of the Faithful; and among the later Arabians also, Babel-Hadidi, *i. e.* the Iron Gate. The Tatars call it Balk-Borcal, *i. e.* the Boundary House. Marco Polo (an. 1300) calls it also "Porta di Ferro."

The city of Derbent stands on a rock, extending along the seashore. It has seven iron gates, each with two towers and a mosque.* The walls built by the Sassanides, with extraordinary care, were fortified with watch-towers. The city was divided into seven quarters, and the Khalif Haroun-al-Raschid erected the iron gates.

Here begins the Caucasian Wall, which extended from the sea to the mountain of Hanashp. Ibn Haukal (A. D. 960) says that the wall was carried far into the sea, to protect the harbour (now completely closed with sand) from storms and hostile attacks. A second parallel wall ran about three hundred yards from the city. The army of Peter I., as late as 1720, defiled between the two. All these walls are built of limestone, hewn into square stones, so large that it would require fifty men to remove one. In this first line of the Caucasian wall there were seven iron gates, and over each gate were two lions† (or sphinxes), as talismans, before which the infidels were said to shrink, who were con-

* The mosques undoubtedly date from the time of the Mohammedan rule.

† These lions are clearly of the time of the Sassanides; the Mohammedans erected no statues or sculpture.

stantly striving to undermine the walls, and to penetrate into the country of the Faithful.* Seven roads led from these seven gates to the city.

Masudi states that the wall commences on the seashore, runs to the fortified tower of Kaliat Tabarestan, and proceeding thence has iron gates at intervals of fourteen miles, each with a strong tower. Edrisi (A.D. 1151) adds, that the entire Caucasian Wall had three hundred gates and towers, which is plainly an exaggeration, although he names a great number of them.†

Derbent declined gradually after the sixteenth century, and its defences were neglected: the

* There is an old legendary basis for this story. When Iskander (Dulkarnein) erected the great wall between the kingdoms of Ormuzd and Ahriman (Iran and Turan), he employed various metals: the dog-nosed Divs lick and gnaw this perpetually, to destroy it: they will, it is believed, succeed one day before the last Judgement. The Mohammedans converted the Divs into Gog and Magog. Among the inhabitants of Derbent a prophetic tradition still prevails, that the empire of the Faithful will not be destroyed, until an infidel enemy with yellow faces shall force their way through the walls into the country. When Niebuhr asked the Turks what hostile people were meant in this story, they replied, the Russians. On his putting the same question to the Arabs, they thought the Europeans at large were intended, as Stamboul would by their encroachments in time be removed to Bagdad. (Ritter.)

† See Ritter, ii. 865, *seq.*

great walls fell into ruin, and were in part wantonly destroyed. It nevertheless retains its place in the history of the world, and its military importance is incalculable, being the link connecting the Caucasian line of defence with the Caspian Sea. When Peter I. entered Moscow, after his campaign in the Caucasus, the most important of all his trophies were considered to be the silver keys of the iron gates of Derbent.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SASSANIDES.—MILITARY COLONIES.—PRINCIPALITIES.—
SERIR.—GENGHIS KHAN.—THE SCHAM KHAL.

THE Sassanides, with a view to secure their dominion over these countries, which they considered so important, not only restored the old walls and fortified all the narrow passes, but they also established on the northern acclivities along the chain of the Caucasus a number of towns and fortified towers, to withstand the first attacks of the Barbarians, and serve as places in which to assemble and make their defensive preparations. They likewise planted on either side of the wall, and in the mountains, military settlements, colonized by people of various nations, for the defence of the mountain-range; these colonies were chiefly under the rule of native princes, who, after the fall of the kingdom of the Sassanides, formed small independent dynasties, and

for a long period defended their ancient faith against the Mohammedans, whilst they lived in perpetual feuds with one another. Probably a part of the Lesghians, who resemble them in their mode of life and dress, although differing entirely in language, may be the descendants of these military colonists.*

The Sassanides also followed the ancient traditions of Persia, restoring the primitive feudal state, which resembled that of the Germans in spirit and character : they planted on the Borders hereditary feudal princes, answering to the Margraves of Germany. In ancient times the celebrated heroic Persian race of Zal and Roostem ruled here, in true feudal union with the Shah. Khosru Anushirvan built Shirvan, as the residence of a Border prince : he formed a principality of the mountain districts above the Koor, with which he invested one of his kinsmen, of the race of the Sassanides. Masudi mentions them as existing since the year 590.

The most remarkable margravate was founded

* The case is at the present day reversed : military colonies are now established by the Russians as a defence against the mountain tribes, formed of the various Cossack peoples ; they extend along the whole line of the Caucasus.

by the Sassanides above Derbent,—the principality of the Lord of the Golden Throne.* The territory of Serir began at a distance of three days' journey north of Derbent : it was, A.D. 960, inhabited by Christians, who yet lived on the best terms with the Moslems. North of the territory of Serir lay the country of the king of Asmid (or Semid), the capital of which was near the frontier of the kingdom of Chozi (Chazaren), and whose king was a Jew ; he nevertheless maintained the best understanding with Serir and Chozi. The prince or king of Serir bore the Persian title of Padishah of Serir, *i.e.* King of the Golden Throne. The commander-in-chief, Behram Khopin, a kinsman of the Shah Khosru Anushirvan, received this margravate for his son as an hereditary fief. He also bore the title of honour Bal (Baal, Bel), and was presented by the Shah, as a token of his high dignity, with a magnificent golden throne, the work of many years.

Whether these Sassanides or Gheber princes afterwards abandoned the religion of Ormuzd and became Christians, or whether the country was conquered and the throne usurped by a race

* Ibn Haukal (A.D. 960) is our chief authority here.

of Christian Greek princes, is a question on which history is silent. In the year 960, Ibn Haukal found this country entirely Christian ; in the time of Edrisi (1130), the kingdom still existed, but it was overthrown by Genghis Khan. The title however appears to have partially survived in the kingdom of the Golden Horde, on the Volga, founded in 1250 by Genghis Khan, and destroyed by Timur in 1395 ;* whilst in this district was formed the new Mohammedan principality of the Scham Khal, the Tatar-Lesghian prince in Tarku. The rise and extent of this principality is very obscure. It is impossible that the Mohammedan sway should have co-existed with the Sassanidan or Christian kingdom of Serir in this country, unless it were confined to the town of Tarku : probably the Mohammedan dominion extended originally over a mountain district more to the west, the princes of which, after the destruction of the kingdom of Serir, obtained power over the greater part of the latter.

The traditions of the country relate that, un-

* Al Wardi (1340) evidently confounds the ancient Prince of the Golden Throne, with the later Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde, whom he calls Serir-ed-Dehab, after the old Serir.

der the Khalif of Damascus, governors were appointed in the frontier provinces, one of whom was placed on the north-eastern side of the Caucasus, with the high title of Scham Khal, or Viceroy of the Khalif, to act as a defence against the Uruss (Russians). The power of the Scham Khal of Tarku, based on the remarkably favourable position he occupied, increased considerably: he acted an important part in the war between Peter I. and Persia. In the year 1740 his power extended over nearly the whole of the Caucasus, to the Black Sea. After all the Transcaucasian countries had fallen into the power of Russia, by conquest or gradual acquisition, the Scham Khal became a mere vassal to that Power, and lost all virtual political existence. The Scham Khal, from his origin and position, was the ancient outpost defence of Islamism in the north against Gog and Magog.

The title of Viceroy of the Khalif has disappeared; but the position, power, and political and religious influence over the Mohammedan races of the Caucasus which he possessed survive to the present day, transmitted to the neighbouring prophet of Muridism, Schamyl.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAUCASUS.—SHAHS OF PERSIA.—ADVANCE OF RUSSIA.—
 POLITICAL POSITION OF CAUCASIA.—MOUNTAINEERS.—
 GEORGIA AND ARMENIA.—TATARS AND PERSIANS.—NUME-
 ROUS RACES.—POLICY OF RUSSIA.—TRADE WITH THE CIR-
 CASSIANS.—INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.—MURIDISM.

THE Caucasus has through all times been a protecting barrier to the ancient monarchies of Asia against the North. The hardy mountaineers have contributed to maintain this defence, but without ever surrendering their own independence, notwithstanding the repeated attempts of the Persians, Byzantines, and Turks, to subjugate them. These attempts have all proved vain. The Mohammedan Shahs of Persia called the eastern Caucasus *Alaphat*, *i. e.* Mountains of Victory, as they boasted of having reduced under their dominion here one hundred and seventy peoples. Where is now their dominion? An old Persian proverb says, "If the Shah is too mighty, let him

only make war on the Caucasus !” The Persians have indeed occasionally seized posts on the north side of the Caucasus, founded settlements, and built towns ; for a short time indeed their sway extended as far as the Volga. But the position was untenable,—snatched hastily in a favouring moment, but lost as suddenly again. Thamas Kuli Khan (Nadir Shah) erected a formidable fortress north of Derbent, about the year 1740, and named it, as if prophetically, Iran Gharab (Iran’s Destruction). From that very time, when the last powerful and warlike monarch occupied the throne of Persia, Iran gradually sank, and Persia’s power and name are now nearly effaced and forgotten in the Caucasus ; the Sultan and the Turks alone meet any longer with consideration and sympathy among the Caucasian races.

The political relations of the country are now completely changed : whereas in former times the Asiatic Powers carried their arms beyond the Caucasus,—at times victorious, but quickly again losing their northern conquests,—at the present time the great Northern Power has extended her dominion into the south Caucasian countries, and occupies a threatening position on the frontier heights between the two Asiatic empires. It is

not probable that this position can be merely a temporary one. In the early times of the human race, civilization characterized the South, and barbarism the North: the picture is now reversed; whilst in the South barbarism and decay everywhere prevail, the Northern Power is, on the contrary, well organized and consolidated; and it is not imaginable, that the two enfeebled Asiatic empires can ever regain the power, unaided, to drive Russia from her position. But other and unlooked-for events have arisen, and the Eastern Powers have received such formidable aid and support from unexpected quarters, that the balance of the future trembles on the beam.

To understand aright the political position of these countries, in this great war, the relations existing among the various races inhabiting them, political, social, and religious, require to be studied. Viewing them collectively, we have here three separate national groups, which from time immemorial have dwelt side by side, yet separate and distinct,—the mountaineers of the Caucasus, the western races, and the eastern races.

The first of these races, without entertaining any sympathy for Turks, Persians, or Europeans, cherish a growing hostility, a deep-rooted hatred

toward Russia: all they demand is to remain independent, with full freedom of action: they require the former Powers to secure their freedom, but without at all being willing to unite with them. They are for the greater part Mohammedans, and have recently found a great political and religious centre, a hero, around whom they gather.

The western nations, Georgia and Armenia, are Christian, for the most part connected with the Russian Church. At no period, either in ancient or modern times, have they had any political, national, or religious connection with the Eastern Caucasians. They have a profound aversion to the Persians and Turks, and will always support Russia against those Powers. The Armenians are decidedly attached to Russia; but although this feeling may not universally prevail among the Georgian nobles, it is very questionable whether any influence or power from Western Europe could ever succeed in shaking their fidelity. Their old men still remember the events of 1800, how barbarously the Turks and Persians treated the Georgians, extorting a tribute of boys and girls from them, and forcibly compelling them to embrace Islamism.

In 1795 Aga Mohammed took and completely destroyed Tiflis, and the Georgian king only retained possession of Kaishaur. All hope died away, and on his deathbed he bequeathed his kingdom to the Emperor Paul, beseeching him in his testament to occupy and protect the country, and to maintain the Christian faith. When Alexander succeeded to the throne, he long hesitated whether to accept a present so beset with difficulties. Tiflis has now between forty and fifty thousand inhabitants !

The eastern side, inhabited by Tatar and Persian races, all of the Mohammedan faith, are inimical to the Russians, notwithstanding the mild treatment they have received. Russia can expect little aid from these peoples ; but whether they will, on the other hand, rise and take a decided part against Russia, and openly join the Turks and Persians, is quite another question. With the latter people they have no sympathy ; they are ignorant of the feeling of independence, and have for centuries been accustomed to foreign rule.

The mountainous districts of the Caucasus are inhabited by perhaps more than a hundred different peoples, remains of races, or distinct and

independent tribes. There has never been any united government or action : a warlike state has already lasted more than one generation, though it cannot be called a regular war. In early times the two most populous races of the Caucasus, the Circassians and Lesghians, made frequent predatory incursions upon all their neighbours : this the Russians would not suffer ; they planted Cossacks near them, to keep them in check, and chastised them from time to time for their robberies. At length Russia seriously formed the project of taking possession of these countries ; but, notwithstanding the vast increase, the gigantic development of her power, the attempt proved perfectly futile. Russia therefore abandoned her plans of conquest by the sword, and sought to accomplish her object by other and peaceable means, by introducing among the inhabitants European civilization, luxury, wants, and customs. Instead of measures of severity, force, and prohibition, she opened her markets to the Circassians, permitted the sale of children, and endeavoured to win the people over by good offices and presents.

Among the Circassians in the west this system was crowned with partial success : regular war-

fare has for many years ceased in that part of the country, and only occasional predatory attacks of small bands of Circassians took place. The system would have led to much better results, if a regular and organized trade had been established; but such an attempt was attended with great difficulties. It might perhaps have been carried into effect in the first instance by Germans. The German institution of guilds and trading fraternities contains the elements of a complete legal organization, which might have been rendered available under such circumstances, and to which might have been safely entrusted the carrying out of such trade with the Circassians, under certain privileges, control, and supervision. These Germans might perhaps have co-operated with the honest Karaim Jews* in carrying their trade into the heart of Circassia. Such a system, consistently carried out, would in time doubtless have tranquillized this country, and a peaceful intercourse have been established with the mountaineers, even at a partial eventual sacrifice of their independence: this has however not been the case, and recent events have entirely broken off all amicable relations.

* See 'Transcaucasia.'

If with the introduction of European civilization among these mountaineers, they at the same time remained Mohammedans, many of the noble traits of character, their energy and spirit, would gradually disappear: they would become a race of mere licked barbarians. True civilization could only spread on the introduction of Christianity; and this might probably be effected by the exertions of zealous and able missionaries; for a great part of the Circassians were in fact Christians in early times. Mohammedanism has been professed by the nobles and princes for more than a century, and at the present time the lower classes of the Circassians are without any definite belief. They are said to have received Christianity from the Genoese, and ancient traditions and sympathies still exist among them: indeed we see a proof that these sympathies are not wholly effaced, in their attachment to their ancient weapons, which the Genoese brought (as they assure us), and on many of which are still seen Latin inscriptions and names. The ruins of Genoese churches and crosses are found everywhere in the mountains, and no Circassian ever rides past these without dismounting, falling on his knees, and paying his devotions.

Russia had indeed at one time nearly succeeded in arresting the war with the Circassians ; they merely kept up a mutual surveillance, and established almost a friendly intercourse : but Russia failed entirely in her attempts to pacify the Eastern Caucasus : the war here assumed a more serious and regular character, and was conducted on a larger scale. In this country other grounds of enmity existed : in Daghestan for a long period Mohammedanism has prevailed generally, which in Circassia has found less ardent followers : here the Mohammedan sect of the Murids has arisen ; religious fanaticism has increased with inconceivable rapidity ; and prophets and leaders have appeared, who have introduced unity of spirit and action among the people, and organized the military operations of the country.

The accounts we receive are very incomplete and inaccurate. These mountaineers use the sword, but not the pen,—the Russians fight, but are not allowed to write : state policy forbids this. A rich field for the inventive genius of the European press ! Occasionally travellers have brought us true statements, but far more generally false ones ; and it is no uncommon thing for people to take pleasure in imposing upon travellers, particularly

when they manifest a curious turn. There are no places of public resort, no coffeehouses, where such information can be obtained: in Tiflis, for example, the war with the mountaineers is never mentioned.

Foreign military officers—Prussians, Austrians, Danes and French—have frequently accompanied the armies of Russia in their campaigns, to perfect themselves in field service: they have uniformly met with the best reception, and been treated as comrades by the Russians. This has naturally called for discretion and reserve on their part, in all the accounts they have made public. The consequence in short is, that comparatively few accurate and connected accounts of this memorable Circassian war have reached Europe.

A manuscript of considerable interest has been communicated to the author by a friend, from which the following account of the origin and spread of Muridism is taken. Although a German by birth, the writer had ample opportunities of studying closely the character and religious and political circumstances of the Circassians; together with many personal accounts respecting the mountaineers of the Eastern parts, which he has introduced into his narrative.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MURIDS.—STRICT MOHAMMEDANS.—THE SULTAN.—ORIGIN OF MURIDISM.—MOSQUE AT JARACH.—MOOLLAH MOHAMMED.—HIS CHARACTER AND POSITION.—PREACHES WAR.—KAZI MOHAMMED.—ANECDOTE OF HADJI ISMAEL.—THE KAZAMET.

THE Murids are not properly a Mohammedan *sect*: their religion differs on no doctrinal grounds from that of other Mohammedans: they form rather a politico-religious party. In fact they preach expressly the unity of the Shiites and Sunnites, they urge upon both parties the duty of forgetting their religious and internal dissensions, and of upraising the standard of the Prophet, and striving for that grand and simple injunction of Mohammed, to “conquer the world and subject it to the Faithful, and to extirpate the Unbelievers.” In their external, political organization, they follow the Persian Soofism; but, on the other hand, they acknowledge the Padishah of Turkey as the lawful Khalif. Nevertheless they reason thus:

—The Khalif is weak ; he has fallen off from the pure doctrines of Islamism, he makes peace with the Unbelievers, and allows them to be about his person ; he is in their power, their prisoner, *or* he is a direct apostate !* His sway over the Faithful has consequently *de facto* ceased, and this has reverted to the Mohammedan body at large, and their Moollahs. Thus we recognize the sovereignty of the people in Islamism. Mohammed everywhere raises up new prophets and leaders from the people, who are commissioned by him to lead the Faithful to victory against the enemy : these they are bound to obey.

Muridism, like everything great in life and history, sprang and was unfolded gradually from an insignificant germ.

In the village of Jarach, in Daghestan, there stands among the other small huts a humble two-storied building : a small staircase on the outside

* History abounds in analogies. When Pope Pius VII. concluded the Concordat with Napoleon, and issued a Bull, re-constituting the Episcopacy of France, a number of the Bishops, who during the Revolution had been expelled from their Sees, and had not been reinstated, protested against the Concordat. A schism ensued : “la petite Église” nearly separated from Rome, and openly called the Pope an Apostolical apostate ; but Napoleon, with an iron hand, suppressed this movement.

leads to the wooden balcony on the second story, which is sheltered from the sun and rain. This is the little village Mosque; the Crescent that surmounts it indicates the service of the building. Withinside everything is simple, naked, and lowly. All mosques have a certain air of simplicity, but they have frequently handsome vestibules, elegant vessels containing water for ablution, etc. There is nothing of this kind here: the mosque at Jarach is a naked apartment, thirty paces long and eighteen wide, dimly lighted by three small round windows, like portholes: the walls are greyish-brown, and the floor covered with a miserable felt carpet. In the middle stands a kind of pulpit, rudely carved of walnut-tree wood. On the walls are inscribed in large letters, half effaced, texts from the Koran. This humble village Mosque has, by the simple power of eloquence, become the cradle of an insurrection, which has set Daghestan in flames, and soon spread over the whole of the Caucasus. In this little mosque Moollah Mohammed, the father and founder of Muridism, preached, with a fervent and inspiriting enthusiasm.

Moollah Mohammed was a man of an imposing appearance, tall and thin, with noble, dark

and expressive features, a lustrous black eye, though quite blind, from long night study and watching, white hair, and a short white beard. His mild and cheerful features, yet marked by severe mental toil, indicated the learned Moollah, who was also distinguished by the green turban, with its wide blue over-garment. Never had blood stained his hands; his life was pure, hardly could sinful thoughts be imagined to have ever entered his mind. The views which the Mosque commanded over the broad green forests of Daghestan, bounded on the far horizon by the blue waves of the Caspian, early impressed on his youthful mind, had in manhood, after he became blind, remained deeply graven on his soul,—the outward world to him,—associated with every thought of himself and of those attached to him. He spent his life in religious observances, and in the study of the holy books, which he expounded to his disciples. And this pious, gentle, peaceable old man, who appeared scarcely to be connected with the earth but by the breath of life,—whose gentle voice was scarce audible in perfect silence,—this man preached the uprising of the people like one man,—preached a bloody and relentless war, and ardent, inextinguishable

hate ! His trembling, guiltless hands blessed the arms which he sent forth to shed torrents of blood.

Next in rank to Arslan Khan, Moollah Mohammed was the highest Cadi, or judge, in the Khanate of Kuril. Until the year 1823 he lived peaceably in Jarach, occupied with his study of the holy books and his judicial duties. On festivals he expounded the teachings of the Prophet to the people, who gathered from even distant lands, to listen to the inspired preacher.

From the tithe of the produce of his parish,* and the freewill offerings and presents of the pious, he soon acquired a considerable income. Nevertheless he himself lived in indigence, whilst he gave largely to the poor. All the Moollahs of the country acknowledged him the first Alim (or learned scribe) in Daghestan. A multitude by degrees gathered around him, who assembled in his dwelling, read with him the Koran, and listened eagerly to his expositions.

Amongst the most diligent and attentive of these pupils, Kazi Mohammed, a native of Bokhara, was pre-eminent : he resided seven years

* The tithe (*zekot*) is among the Mohammedans likewise the legal impost by which the clergy are supported.

with the Moollah, who received him into his intimacy and confidence. Suddenly he quitted his old master, to return, as he said, to his native country. But ere a year had passed, he had returned to Jarach, where he lived as before with the aged Moollah Mohammed. The latter, who loved him as a son, soon remarked an unaccountable change in his whole manner and mode of life. Kazi Mohammed shunned all society, no longer frequented the mosque, nor attended the expositions of the Koran, scarcely ever quitting his little cell. Once Moollah Mohammed surprised him at midnight : he found him, by his solitary lamp, deeply buried in the study of the Koran. The old master, in astonishment, asked him the cause of this change in his life and manner ; remarking that there must be some secret cause, perhaps the burden of some sin upon his conscience, which no prayers and fasting could expiate.

“Assuredly,” replied Kazi Mohammed, “I have a great secret ; and therefore it is that I have returned to thee, to prove my gratitude for all thy paternal love and care of me during these seven years, by disclosing to thee the means of attaining this holy mystery. Since I quitted thee, a year and a day ago, a new light has fallen on

my mind, and revealed to me the true and profound sense of the holy books. Ye men of Daghestan vainly imagine that ye understand the law; but ye all—ay, and thou likewise, who art so deeply read in the Koran—perceive only the dead word, but not its deep and divine import!”

In vain did Moollah Mohammed press Kazi to communicate to him the new light and knowledge that had been revealed to him. “It were unbecoming for me,” said Kazi, “to attempt to teach so celebrated an Alim, who moreover has been my paternal instructor: but if thou desirest, we will repair together to the renowned Effendi Hadji Ismael, who has initiated me in the deep secrets of this new knowledge.”

Moollah Mohammed consented, and they journeyed together, accompanied by several other of the pupils, to Kurdamir, a village in Shirvan, where Hadji Ismael at that time resided. On their arrival they found the venerable Effendi engaged in cutting young twigs from his mulberry-trees, to feed his silkworms. Astonishment and dread seized on all, when they saw the holy man doing a thing so strictly and particularly forbidden by the Koran. Hadji looked up, and without any customary greeting, he said

to Moollah Mohammed, "Ye well know that it is forbidden by the Koran to lop off these twigs ; but this was only to prevent the extirpation of trees which are so necessary in Arabia. The case is different in this country ; here we can prune the mulberry-twigs without at all injuring the trees ; at the same time they serve for food to one of the most useful of God's creatures, which gives the means of livelihood to innumerable people."

The wisdom of this remark struck the hearers forcibly, and prepared their minds for the new teachings and revelations which they now received from Hadji Ismael. Moollah Mohammed and his scholars remained some time with the Effendi, gaining an insight into the true sense of many parts of the Koran, conversing on the decline of the Faith, and the means of reviving it, but above all on the chief subject,—throwing off the yoke of the Unbelievers. After Hadji Ismael had opened all the stores of his knowledge to Moollah Mohammed, he bestowed on him his benediction as a Murshid, or spiritual preacher, urging him solemnly to devote his life to the revival of the Faith in Daghestan.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that Hadji Is-

mael suddenly disappeared, and nothing was ever heard of him again there or elsewhere ; he had kindled the spark, and Muridism speedily spread throughout Daghestan. The Russians assert that this remarkable man was an emissary of the Persian Government, which at that time anticipated a rupture with Russia, who was sent to stir up an insurrection in Daghestan, with a view to embarrass the operations of Russia.

On his return to Jarach, Moollah Mohammed devoted himself more than ever to the study of the holy books, shutting himself up in his cell the whole day long. The reputation of his sanctity increased, and pilgrims flocked to him from all quarters to hear his teaching and exhortation. He dwelt more frequently and more earnestly than ever on the corruption of the age, the degeneracy of the Faith, and the necessity of restoring its inner vitality, in order to secure the victory against its external enemies. In this manner he gradually prepared his hearers for carrying out the great object he had in view, and by degrees their confidence in him became more and more fervent and unbounded.

One day, when the multitude was assembled in greater numbers than usual, he appeared

before them, and with an emphatic and solemn energy, he preached to them of the necessity of repentance, reproached them with their indifference to their religion, denounced the Moollahs for their neglect of their sacred duties, and their engrossing care for their worldly interests. He then proceeded to accuse himself as an example of this laxity of duty, confessing before the assembled people his errors and ignorance, in never having truly understood or acted up to the meaning and spirit of the Law. "Take all that I possess—relieve me of my burden!" he exclaimed; "it is your gift, I am unworthy of it: I stumble in the dark; I have imperfectly, nay falsely, taught and preached the holy laws of the Koran to you."

Touched by his earnestness and humility, the people entreated him not to give away the little he had received from them, which, they said, he had employed indeed almost wholly in acts of beneficence; and begging him, for the future, not to refuse the pious gifts of the Faithful. But the old man remained resolute, and that same day he distributed all that he possessed among the poor, living himself in great poverty.

The following address was written down by one of his hearers; copies of it were rapidly made and circulated through the whole of Daghestan. We give a literal translation of it, on account of the extraordinary political effect it produced.

“ Your wealth, your dowries, your marriages, your children lie under a curse; Allah has stamped them with the seal of hell! for ye continue to live in your sins, ye will not acknowledge and fulfil the law of the Prophet. He who acknowledges the true God, says the Koran, can be the slave of no man; he must follow and obey the holy commands of his religion, and dares not bow before the great men of the earth. His first duty is, by persuasion and the sword, to spread the light of the true Faith in the world, to forsake his family and country, when danger threatens Islamism, and to arm himself against the Unbelievers. And ye—what have ye done? what do ye? The Russians have come into the country, and ye have cowardly submitted to their sway without a struggle! The free Musulman has abjectly taken the yoke, and become the slave of the Unbeliever,—of the Infidel, who has desecrated his mosques, who has trampled on

his freedom, who probably, nay assuredly, contemplates the destruction of Islamism. And ye, miserable cowards, devoid of faith, and heedless of the commands and words of the Prophet, ye pursue greedily earthly good, and allow our religion to perish. People! since the Russians have come among you, your brow has borne the seal of the curse! In vain ye observe the Kamaz and the Khalbruks; in vain ye frequent the mosques: Heaven disdains your rites and your prayers. The presence of the Unbelievers bars your access to the throne of Allah. Pray, perform penance, but above all hasten to the holy war (Kazamet). Prepare yourselves for it by prayer, fasting, and penance; the hour will come, and I give you now my benediction for the battle!”

From the day when this energetic harangue was delivered dates the birth of Muridism. The hearers were carried away by the old man's spirit and enthusiasm: the speech spread with the rapidity of lightning in the country far and wide. The disciples of Moollah Mohammed dispersed themselves in the mountains, organizing insurrection, and reducing the general ferment into systematic action. Associations were formed

in every part, which had each their defined object and their common worship, together with secret teachings, and speedily a general organization under fixed legal forms.

CHAPTER IX.

OPPOSITION TO MURIDISM.—THE KAZAMET.—DISTURBANCES
IN THE RUSSIAN PROVINCES.—ARSLAN KHAN.—HIS INTER-
VIEW WITH MOOLLAH MOHAMMED.—WAR BETWEEN PER-
SIA AND TURKEY.—KHAN OF AVARIA.—KAZI MOOLLAH.

THE doctrines of Moollah Mohammed were not received without opposition in certain quarters. Some of the Moollahs maintained that the Khalif (Sultan) alone had the right to declare the Kazamet, or war against the Unbelievers ; and likewise that the Koran forbids the war when the Faithful are the weaker party, lest the Faith be exposed to danger. But these objections had no effect upon the mass of the people, who followed openly the teaching of Moollah Mohammed. The latter thenceforth lived in complete retirement, in his cell, leaving it only to perform service in the mosque. His piety, and the mystery that attended his secluded life, enhanced the effect and influence of his doctrines and dis-

courses on the minds of all : the number of the initiated increased daily ; they acknowledged him as their Murshid, and called themselves Murids (teaching disciples, or apostles).

At first these roaming Murids restricted their preaching mostly to penance, after the example of their master, Moollah Mohammed ; but in a short time the insurrectionary movement increased, and they preached the war with fervour. The Murids visited every Aoul, or village, and collected the inhabitants ; then, standing upon a hill, and turning toward the North (Russia), they exclaimed, “ Mussulmen ! arise—to the Kazamet ! ” Every one who opposed them they beat with a wooden *shaska*, or sabre, which they made on purpose.

Beside the increasing predatory incursions and sallies of the independent mountaineers, disturbances also broke out in the districts occupied by, or dependent on, Russia, which, although occurring singly, showed the general spread of the political ferment. On the occasion of a partial rising of this kind taking place at Kury, General Yermolof summoned Arslan, the Khan of Kazikumik and Kury, a dependant on Russia, to investigate and suppress it. Arslan Khan desired

Moollah Mohammed to appear with his followers, and defend themselves.

On the high-road, not far from Kirag, near the village of Kassimkent, Arslan Khan met the blind old Murshid, surrounded by a large number of Murids and Moollahs. The Khan hastened up to Moollah Mohammed, and in an angry and menacing tone asked him how he could dare to hold such insurrectionary harangues. "Knowest thou not the superior might of the Russians, and dost thou not reflect how much innocent blood will be shed by thy fault?"

"I know well," replied Moollah Mohammed, "that the Russians are stronger than we, but Allah is far stronger still than they. We are, one and all, sinners, and need repentance: I do penance and pray; I have withdrawn from the world, to obtain Allah's grace; I do no man wrong."

"But do not your followers roam over the country, preaching the Kazamet, and ill-treating all who oppose them? Knowest thou not what misery you are bringing upon us?"

"My Murids acknowledge the truth of the Scripture; they only remind the people of the commands of Allah and the Prophet; and if at

times their zeal carries them away, to commit actions which are not allowed in every-day life, this only shows the people the more strongly what it is necessary to do. And thee too, O Khan, I exhort to throw off the cares of the world, and to reflect whither we are all hastening, the meanest slave as well as the greatest lord and prophet. There is no saving health, unless we acknowledge and attain to Allah's truth, and do his holy will according to the Shariat."

"Thy words are superfluous," answered Arslan: "I know my duties, and punctually fulfil the commands prescribed in the Koran, and the prayers of the Shariat."

"Thou liest!" exclaimed the Murshid. "Thou art a slave of the Unbelievers (Russians); and thy observance of the holy rites is therefore worthless and unprofitable."

He had hardly uttered these words when the offended Khan felled the old man to the ground with a blow of his fist, and ordered his Nukars (attendants) to disperse the Murids and Moollahs, and to demand a fine of each. But the Khan soon saw, by the silence with which his orders were received, that he had gone too far: he had

struck a holy man, a blind old man, and punished Moollahs and Murids for obeying a plain command of the Koran. He called Moollah Mohammed to him, and begged him to forget the offence. "But I entreat thee," he added, "let not thy Murids violate the Russian laws; for the Russians would then order me to deliver thee up, and I should be obliged to choose between the duty which I have sworn to perform toward them, and the fear of drawing on me the wrath of Allah, if I delivered so holy an Alim as thou to the Russians, who would seize on my Khanate and all my possessions."

"Thy offence against me God will forgive; but, O Khan, I counsel thee at least not to bind thyself wholly and heartily to the Russians; do not subjugate to them the people of Daghestan. If thou mayst not allow thy subjects to obey the Tarikat,* do not at least deter the other inhabitants of Daghestan from doing so. Such conduct may be politic, and prove of advantage to thee likewise: the more enemies the Russians have,

* The authentic expositions of the Koran are divided into three parts: 1. the Makarifat, which treats of doctrines:—2. the Tarikat, which expounds the morality of the Koran:—and 3. the Shariat, which comprises the judicial portion, and also refers to the usages and observances of daily life.

the more needful to them is thy friendship, and they will load thee with honours and presents ; but when they have subjugated the whole of Daghestan, thou wilt be superfluous to them, and thou wilt lose thy power, thy influence, perhaps thy Khanate.”

Arslan Khan was inwardly convinced of the truth of Moollah Mohammed’s words ; he loaded him with presents, but collected the fines from the other Moollahs, and informed General Yermolof that he had restored order. From that time however he was no longer trusted.

On his return to Jarach, Moollah Mohammed found an immense multitude awaiting his arrival, anxious to hear what had happened to him : he endeavoured to pacify them, and forbade them to take up arms until he should give the signal. Soon afterwards he summoned the chiefs in Jarach, and elected the Shikh-Shaban of Avaria (afterwards the celebrated leader known by the name of Kazi Moollah), laid his hand upon his head and gave him his benediction as the Kazi, the chief of the Kazamet, or holy war. He then addressed the chief in these words :—

“The Khanat of Kuril is under the power and rule of the Russians, bound hand and foot ; but

ye are free, and your duty it is to begin the war. In the name of the Prophet I command thee, Kazi Moollah, return to thy home, collect the people, arm them, and with the blessing of Allah begin the holy war! Paradise awaits those who fall, every man who slays a Russian; but woe to those who turn their backs on the Giaour!"

From that time Moollah Mohammed took no active part in the movement; in fact he did not again even preach, but lived in complete seclusion. Nevertheless Yermolof in 1825 ordered Arslan Khan to seize the Murshid, and deliver him up at Tiflis. Horul Beg received the charge to carry out this order; he surprised the old man, and took him to Kurach, whence however by the aid of his friends he escaped to Tabassaran, and remained concealed there.

Meanwhile the war which broke out between Persia and Turkey diverted the attention of the Russian Government in Caucasia from Daghestan. Kazi Moollah skilfully took advantage of this to increase the spread of Muridism, and to gain the entire eastern side of the Caucasus to his projects. Agents from Persia aided him, inciting the people to insurrection, and promising speedy assistance. Nevertheless Kazi Moollah

wisely abstained from any offensive operations until the year 1830, contenting himself with fortifying his strength internally. He won over the mountaineers, not only by his eloquence, but even employed force when they resisted his summons, enforcing obedience in numerous villages, which he obliged to give him hostages. He also compelled the hereditary district chiefs, the Khans and Begs, to embrace Muridism. In the Khanate of Avaria however his efforts wholly failed.

The Khan of Avaria was dead; his son was only in his fourteenth year, and his mother ruled for him. A band of fanatical Murids entered the village of Asbatli. Bakhu Biké, the mother of the young Khan Nunzal, sent to Kazi Moollah, desiring him not to go to Khunzach, where she resided; but saying that she was ready to send him one of her other sons as a hostage. Kazi Moollah, without heeding her request, pressed forward at the head of 8000 Murids, into the land as far as Khunzach, and a portion of his troops even entered the city. The inhabitants were in despair; they had no confidence in their youthful Khan. His mother then, sword in hand, appeared among the helpless assembly of the inhabitants. "I see," she exclaimed, "you are unfit to use

the sword ; give it up to us women, and clothe yourselves in our tchedras (linen garments).” The men were put to shame by these words ; they took courage, threw themselves on the enemy, headed by their young Khan, and routed them. Kazi Moollah was wounded in the head, and escaped with difficulty.

These reverses however did not daunt Kazi Moollah : he assembled his followers, and formed his stronghold in the forests of Tchunkeskan. Russian detachments made frequent excursions thither, but without giving him any serious trouble ; and even considerable expeditions, under General Rosen and Prince Bekovitch, were attended with no success. These failures on the part of the Russians served only to increase the fame of Kazi Moollah, and his respect in the eyes of the superstitious Lesghians. “ See ye not,” he would exclaim, “ the clear proofs that we and our holy task are under the protection of Allah ? To gain the victory, ye need only to pray ; Allah strikes the foe with blindness, so that they cannot discover us. See ye not how they shrink back before an invisible power ? ”

Kazi Moollah now assumed the offensive, one after another, he took Azlebi, Parent, and Tarku.

He besieged Burnaya, and was on the point of taking it, when General Disterlo arrived just in time to relieve the place. Kazi Moollah was defeated, and retired into his forests; in ten days however he appeared before Vnezapnaya, but failed to take it. On the approach of General Emanuel, he retreated. Subsequently he fought a bloody battle at the village of Aukh, in which the Murids were victorious. In his forest retreat he received, in August 1831, a deputation from Tabassaran, who announced to him that the people had embraced his doctrines, that Heaven had in consequence blessed them, that they had fought and conquered the Giaours on Mount Karnauk, and had driven them entirely out of Tabassaran.

An event occurred, which added essential importance to his position. In 1831 a report was suddenly spread abroad (which proved to be a false one), that the Persians had unexpectedly invaded the southern provinces. All the Russian troops in Daghestan in consequence were moved south, to Shirvan, only two battalions remaining in garrison at Derbent. The whole country of Daghestan thus fell at once into the power of Kazi Moollah. Tabassaran alone, in the south, remained faithful to the Russians: it was conse-

quently devastated. Kazi Moollah laid siege to Derbent ; but, after eight days' blockade, he was forced to retire, on the approach of General Kakhanoſ. He then went to northern Tabassaran, where he joined the family of the Murshid, Moollah Mohammed, and married his daughter. He afterwards attacked Kizliar, and returned home with considerable booty.

But the star of Kazi Moollah now began to decline. He repaired to Ghimry, and resigned the command of the Murids, in the camp at Agatzeh-Kalé, to Gamzad Beg. Colonel Miklashovski attacked and completely defeated him.

CHAPTER X.

DEATH OF KAZI MOOLLAH.—RENEWED FERVOUR OF THE MURIDS.—GAMZAD BEG CHOSEN COMMANDER.—HIS OVERTURES TO THE KHAN OF AVARIA.—TREACHEROUS CONDUCT OF GHAMZAD.—DEATH OF THE KHAN.—SCHAMYL CHOSEN LEADER.

EARLY in 1832 Kazi Moollah gained a few more victories, on the line between Vladikaukas and Kizliar. But General Rosen now repaired in person to Tchetchenia, plundered it, and crossing the Soulak proceeded to Ghimry, the birthplace of Kazi Moollah. Since his unsuccessful retreat from Derbent the latter had lost the confidence of the mountaineers, and Daghestan was now all but lost. He summoned Gamzad Beg to his aid, but the latter refused to obey the call. He then collected all his followers around him, and addressed them in these words:—"I see my end drawing near: I die here upon the spot where I was born; I die for the holy truth of the

Tarikat, for the holy Shariat. Let him alone who is prepared to die remain with me !”

The battle at Ghimry was obstinate and bloody : at length the village was taken. Kazi Moollah defended himself in his house, and fell, with all its inhabitants. The Russians exposed his dead body, as they found it, to instil a salutary terror into the captive women and children. The effect produced was precisely the reverse : death restored to Kazi Moollah the reputation of sanctity, which he appeared to have lost at the close of his life. The dead body appeared with one hand grasping his beard, and the other pointing to heaven ; but this is the attitude of the Mussulman in prayer, and all the spectators at once believed that Kazi Moollah had breathed his last in a moment of fervent prayer ; they regarded this as a fresh proof of his sanctity and inspiration, and the belief in his doctrines gained new strength. The Murshid, the aged Moollah Mohammed, repaired to Gamzad Beg at Irgana, and gave him his benediction, as the chief of the holy war and successor of Kazi Moollah.

This appointment must be regarded as ill-advised and unsuitable ; but it is only a proof how deep root Muridism had already gained, and what

power it had acquired, that even under this bad management it did not dissolve. To Kazi Moolah it was owing that this danger was averted: the theocratic, political, and military state, which he had established, maintained its existence and efficiency, and subsequently this has been further organized with admirable skill by Schamyl.

The newly-appointed commander, Imam el Azem Gamzad Beg, was born at Stuzal; he was of middle stature and somewhat stout; his dress was the Circassian one, but entirely white: over his cap he wore a turban,—green, white, or black, according to circumstances. On the day of his entry into Khunzach he had a black turban, because the Prophet wore one of that colour on his entry into Mecca. Five Russian deserters, in the Russian uniform, constantly accompanied him, which caused the report among the Russians that he had a Russian guard of honour.

Gamzad Beg maintained a passive attitude in 1833: he sought first to consolidate his power in the interior. At the close of that year he invaded and conquered the country of Gergebil, and defeated the Khans of Mekhtuli and Akusha, who were allied to the Scham Khal of Tarku.

The richest and most powerful prince of this

district was the Khan of Avaria, who had in former times received extraordinary honour from the Sultan. Gamzad Beg entertained a deep feeling of hatred and envy for this Khan, who in the general opinion far surpassed him in rank and importance ; and he determined to seize upon his throne. After conquering the intervening territory, and enlisting under his standard all capable of bearing arms, willing or unwilling, he invaded Avaria at the head of 33,000 men. He sent offers to the young Khan of uniting with him, couched in such plausible and even humble language, that the Khan immediately perceived the deceitful snare, and haughtily refused them. His mother Bakhu Biké, however, who five years before had, by her resolution and heroism, defeated the attack of Kazi Moollah, saw clearly that valour was here unavailing, and that there was no assistance to be hoped for : she therefore pressed her son to ride into Gamzad's camp, and conclude a peace on any terms. The proud young Khan refused. After in vain using tears and entreaties, she said, " My son, I know not whether it be fear or pride that makes you act thus ; but as your resolution is taken, so is mine ; I will myself go to the camp of Gamzad Beg."

The young Khan now, in his turn, entreated his mother not to expose herself to such a danger. At length it was resolved that Omar Beg, the Khan's youngest brother, a lad of sixteen, should bear the message of peace to Gamzad Beg. The issue of the negotiation was awaited with impatience. Hours passed on. In vain the Khan and his mother gazed anxiously from the high terrace in the direction of the enemy's camp,—the young lad did not return! The mother's fears at length overpowered her; she earnestly implored her son to ride to the camp, and ascertain the fate of his brother, and to offer terms of peace on any terms.

The Khan could no longer resist his mother's tears. "As you are determined on my death," he replied, "I go to meet it!" He and his Nukars (vassals) leaped on their horses, and rode off to the enemy's camp, their minds filled with sad presentiment. When they had proceeded about half the distance, a violent thunderstorm came on so suddenly, that instantly the streams overflowed, while the lightning flashed around them, and the thunder rolled incessantly overhead. The Khan's charger reared, and refused to stir; his superstitious followers regarded this as a warning from

heaven for them to return ; but, on seeing them again, the indignation of his mother knew no bounds, and she reproached him bitterly for his cowardice. Burning with shame, and gnashing his teeth with rage, the Khan threw himself again upon his horse, and galloped at full speed, followed by only eight Nukars, to the hostile camp. Gamzad came out to meet him, received him with an air of the utmost respect and humility, and conducted him to his tent, where he found his brother.

Gamzad however soon found an opportunity to begin a quarrel ; he declared that one of the Khan's Nukars had stolen one of his horses ; and as the Khan had paid no heed to the complaint, nor punished the offender, Gamzad treated this as a personal insult, and was himself about to put the Nukar to death. Fired with rage, the Khan declared that he would allow no one to punish his Nukar. High words ensued. On a sudden Gamzad quitted the tent, and made a sign to the Murids standing in front of it. Instantly several shots were fired into the tent, aimed at the eight Nukars, who were standing together: they all fell dead on the spot. Tchonnan Beg, Gamzad's nephew, seized his pistol and aimed

at the Khan's brother, who perceiving the movement fired at the same instant: Omar Beg fell dead, and Tchonan Beg mortally wounded.*

The Khan now rushed out of the tent, with drawn shaska (sabre), and with herculean strength cut down all before him: each stroke struck off a head, or cleft a man to his girdle. The Murids, speechless with terror, hardly dared to

* The following incident manifests the general deep veneration and attachment in the East to the princely rulers. Tchonan Beg, when mortally wounded, called his father to his side, and said to him, "Listen, father! I have but a few moments to live. I have raised my hand against the son of my liege lord: Allah has willed that I should be a criminal! You have no other son—fulfil my last wish; save Bulatch Beg, the youngest and only brother of our Khan, and adopt him as your child, and guard him as the apple of your eye, that he may not fall into the hands of the wicked, who wish to slay him. He will one day be the Khan of Avaria, and reward you for it: perhaps this act will procure me pardon for my misdeed." Tchonan Beg expired immediately he had uttered these words. The old man at once took Bulatch Beg, and concealed him in his Aoul. The Murids however discovered him: the boy, who was only twelve years old, exclaimed, "You have killed my mother, my brother, my whole house—let me live, I am so young! Take me to my cousin Arslan Khan, of Kazikumik,—he will reward you in a princely manner." But the Murids were merciless, and carried him to Tcherakul, where he threw himself from a rock into the torrent of the Kolsu. With him the ancient princely race of Avaria became extinct.

defend themselves. The Khan received a wound in his face: covering it with his left hand, he laid about him with his right, cutting down every one who came near him: eye-witnesses of the scene declare that he slew above twenty men, and among them the brother-in-law of Gamzad. His formidable strength, and the strong feeling of old respect to the sacred person of the Khan, disarmed resistance, and all took to flight. But presently from a distance a shot was fired, followed by others, and the Khan fell dead.

Thus terminated the life of Khan Abu Nunzal, at twenty-two years of age,—the handsomest and noblest man of his people,—a victim to treachery. When the news of the event reached the camp, the mountaineers were seized with panic, accustomed as they had been from childhood to honour the Khan of Avaria as the first of princes. The people fled in all directions, until at length the Murid Schamyl succeeded in rallying them, and inducing them to return.

Gamzad Beg now repaired with his military force to Khunzach, the chief town of Avaria, which he took without resistance. He slew the Khan's mother, with the rest of the family, and thus became sole master of Avaria. He next at-

tempted to conquer Dargo likewise, an independent country, the inhabitants of which were favourably inclined to the Russians ; but in this attempt he failed ; he was defeated, and obliged to retire into Avaria.*

A second time Gamzad Beg prepared to invade Dargo, but before he could carry his plan into execution, he fell by the hand of two brothers, Osman and Hadji Murad. These men were the foster-brothers of Omar Beg, the second brother of the Khan Abu Nunzal of Avaria. They had served as Murids under Gamzad ; but their father reproached them with their faithlessness to the race of their native princes of Avaria, and instigated them to avenge the death of their foster-brother Omar Beg. They did so, and shot Gamzad Beg in the mosque at Khunzach.† The younger brother Hadji Murad escaped, and seized upon the throne of Avaria.

Although a Murid, Gamzad Beg lacked enthusiasm, and he was therefore not regarded by the people, like Kazi Moollah, as a prophet sent by

* The manuscript communicated to the author by his friend, mentioned above, ends here.

† This murder of Gamzad Beg is graphically related by Bodenstedt, in his ' Völker des Caucasus,' p. 307.

Allah. His ambition and zeal were not stimulated by the religious motive of fighting against the Unbelievers, but he took advantage of his position of commander of the holy war, merely to promote his own personal interests, and to indulge his ambition.

After the death of Gamzad Beg, the conduct of the war devolved as of course, and without any further nomination, on Imam Schamyl; the old Murshid Moollah Mohammed, who had consecrated for the office Kazi Moollah and Gamzad Beg, having died. Schamyl's brilliant martial qualifications, in which he surpassed all the other Murids, pointed him out as the proper person for such a command.* Schamyl had been the favourite pupil and faithful companion, as well as the most valiant and skilful warrior, of Kazi Moollah. On the taking of Ghimry he fell at Kazi's side, pierced by two balls: how he contrived to save his life is unknown. Under Gamzad Beg, likewise, Schamyl was by far the most distinguished warrior.

* In the first instance Tashav Hadji offered himself as a candidate for the command, but he voluntarily submitted, in 1837, to Schamyl, who was far his superior in ability.

CHAPTER XI.

IMAM SCHAMYL.—HIS PERSON AND CHARACTER.—DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIANS.—HIS EXTRAORDINARY ESCAPES.—SCHAMYL'S INFLUENCE OVER THE MURIDS.—CAMPAIGNS OF 1839-1843.—GENERALS GRABBE AND GOLOVIN.

IMAM SCHAMYL, like Kazi Moollah, was born in the village of Ghimry, in the country of the Koissubulins, in 1797. In stature he is not tall, but of very noble and handsome proportions. He is not by nature physically strong, but he has acquired remarkable power and vigour by every kind of bodily exercise. His head, of a beautiful and regular shape, his aquiline nose, small mouth, blue eyes, blond hair and beard, and delicate white skin, seem to point rather to a Germanic than an Eastern extraction. His hands and feet are formed with the most beautiful symmetry; his mien and every movement are proud and dignified.

From his childhood Schamyl manifested an

iron character, a calm dignity in his whole demeanour, which nothing could shake. He courted solitude, and maintained a reserve towards every one; at the same time he studied with ardent zeal under his master, Moollah Djelal Eddin, to whom he has always been affectionately attached, and to whom he still shows the deepest veneration and unreserved filial obedience. Entire days and nights has he passed in the rocky defiles of his native mountains, buried in the study of the Koran, the Arabian theosophy, and the doctrines of Soofism, together with the ancient Persian heroic legends and songs. He has manifestly faith in himself, and in his vocation as a prophet sent by Allah. Whilst gifted with fiery eloquence, his extraordinary talents as a general are unquestioned.

Upon the death of Gamzad Beg the greater part of the Murids in Avaria were slain. Hadji Murad defended the country and the throne against Schamyl with great skill, and allied himself closely to Russia. Schamyl's first exploit, on assuming the command, was to defeat the Russian General Lasskoi, who had taken his native village Ghimry. Nevertheless he failed to obtain any firm footing in Avaria: the inhabi-

tants had a hatred against the Murids, which was increased by the treacherous murder of their Khan.

We pass over the series of engagements between Schamyl and the Russians, which have been repeatedly published; how far the accounts we have received are correct and trustworthy we cannot say: one thing is well known, that he carried on a guerilla warfare, with a genius and energy scarcely paralleled in history.

On several occasions Schamyl was in situations of desperate peril, but he always contrived to escape by boldness or stratagem. In more than one instance he ostensibly submitted to the Russians; but no sooner had they in consequence withdrawn, than he threw off the mask, and employed the opportunity to increase his influence and power: he represented to his followers that the Russians were struck blind by Allah, and that in the most advantageous positions, when they had him nearly in their power, their reason suddenly forsook them, their sight was darkened, and, unaware of their advantages, they left him full liberty to escape. The Russians reproached him with deceit and treachery, but his conduct only raised him in the eyes of his own people,

as the Mohammedans regard every breach of faith with Infidels as a venial act.

In 1837 Schamyl apparently submitted to General Fesi, and thus induced him to evacuate the country with his troops; in consequence of which stratagem, Schamyl's influence increased to such a pitch, that his old rival Tashav Hadji voluntarily submitted to him, and many of the wavering and even hostile tribes joined his ranks.

In the years 1839 to 1843 the Russians made great efforts to conquer the country. General Grabbe, a very skilful officer, took the field against Schamyl with great energy: the latter was gradually hemmed in more and more, until at length he was driven with a few thousand of his most faithful followers into the almost impregnable rock-fortress of Akhulgo. General Grabbe at first contemplated starving him out, but Schamyl had accumulated immense stores of every kind. The place was regularly besieged, and was at length taken, after incredible efforts; but Schamyl had escaped,—he was nowhere to be found in the fortress!

On another occasion he escaped, in a perfectly mysterious manner, from almost certain death or

imprisonment: this happened when he fell at the side of Kazi Moollah, wounded by two balls: he was thought to be dead; but after a short time he on a sudden appeared again among his assembled Murids, and exposed to view his bared breast, on which the wounds were still visible. With one voice they exclaimed, "Allah has recalled Schamyl from the dead, to rule over the living!"

The Avarians once surrounded the Murids in the castle of Khunzach, and set fire to it; all perished by fire or the sword, Schamyl alone effecting his escape. But these escapes were always a profound mystery, Schamyl representing them as attributable to an especial miracle from Heaven.

In the year 1841, the Russians, under the command of the Governor-General Golovin, opened a campaign with a great display of power, but which was unattended with any success. In the same manner another expedition, in 1842, completely failed; and even General Grabbe, whom the Mountaineers most feared, next to Yermolof and Sass, won no laurels and was recalled. The Georgian Prince Argutinski Dolgoruki alone met with any success at that pe-

riod, gaining possession of the Khanate of Kazikumik.

One instance of Schamyl's warlike character and tactics may suffice.* In the autumn of 1841 the Russians made an expedition against Tchetchenia. They forced their way into the country, exposed to harassing attacks on every side : a constant fire was kept up from behind every bush, tree, and rock ; and they advanced amidst martial shouts from their unseen enemies : but the Mountaineers nowhere appeared in any force, nor engaged in any battle, except near the Asule, where bloody combats took place, which ended however in no decided results. The Russians burned down the villages and the stores of hay, and carried off the women and children, and some herds of cattle : all these spoils they were obliged to keep with the main body of the army ; for no sooner had they passed, than the Tchetchens appeared again and harassed their rear. The expedition ended in October, without any great advantage having been gained.

Scarcely had the Russian troops dispersed to their different quarters, when Schamyl appeared

* Compare Bodenstedt, 'Die Völker des Caucasus,' p. 543.

in the country they had quitted, at the head of his followers. He immediately compelled all who were capable of bearing arms to join him, threatening all who held back with a fine of a silver rouble, or fifty Russian lashes with the knout. In a few days his army increased to 15,000 men. With the rapidity of lightning he invaded the country of the Kumyks, allies of the Russians, burned their villages, slew or took prisoners the inhabitants, drove off all the cattle, and advanced to Kizliar. The Colonel in command there went out to meet him, with a few hundred men and two cannon; but they were all killed, and the guns taken. The commandants of the two fortresses, between which Schamyl had advanced, sallied out, to form a junction at his rear and cut off his retreat. They failed: Schamyl had effected his retreat, ere they could attain their object. The Russian Generals were only two versts apart; Schamyl pressed on between them with his troops, which he rapidly formed into three columns, attacked the Russians with two of these, right and left, and, protected by the third, carried off to the mountains cannon, prisoners, and forty thousand head of cattle.

This exploit raised the fame of Schamyl to an incredible pitch ; at the same time it was an era in the war, inasmuch as the Mountaineers for the first time captured two pieces of artillery,—the Czar's pistols, as they called them.

In 1842 General Grabbe undertook an expedition into the country of the Gumbetes, which entirely failed. Grabbe, Sass, and Golovin were recalled, the whole plan of operations was changed, and simply defensive measures were adopted ; the only object being to cut off all supplies to the Mountaineers, and thus starve them out. This system was pursued for some years, by Governor-General Von Neidhart, who succeeded to the command, but without any signal success. This General had great administrative talent, by the exercise of which he has effected much good in this department. In a military point of view, the conquest or pacification of the mountain tribes has not advanced a single step.

In 1845 Prince Woronzof, one of the most distinguished and noble men whom Russia possesses, assumed the command in the Caucasian war, with almost royal authority. He retained the administration until 1854. During the early part of his government the relations of Russia

with the Mountaineers became much more favourable; and the western tribes, who have the collective name of Circassians, were almost wholly pacified. The war, properly speaking, had here long been extinguished, and only occasionally small predatory bands appeared, who contented themselves with capturing a few prisoners, with a view to obtain a ransom, or carrying off fifty to a hundred head of cattle to the mountains. Prince Woronzof had intercourse with the chiefs, and is said to have given them rich presents, and succeeded greatly in winning their attachment. He organized an active trade with the Circassians, and permitted the sale of boys and girls for Turkey.

The war against Schamyl meanwhile remained in the same suspense. Woronzof attempted, by burning and cutting down long paths through the forests, to open the country by degrees;* but the forests were too dense, and the land beyond them too mountainous and inaccessible, to render this work successful. He effected little

* Napoleon did something similar to this, when he intersected the Vendée by long and broad roads. By this means the nerve of defence was materially severed in the forests, and the resistance in 1830-31 was speedily overcome.

here in conquest. Since the breaking out and the continuance of the war with Turkey and the Western Powers, the communication between the Caucasus and Constantinople has become perfectly open. The Mountaineers have been greatly assisted by supplies of guns, ammunition, and provisions; and, although little authentic information has been received, it appears to be quite clear that the Russians have lost all influence over the Mountaineers, that Schamyl at the present moment is the acknowledged head of all the inhabitants of the Caucasus, and that the Russians are now restricted to act on the defensive.

The Circassians gladly accept the supplies of ammunition, salt, etc., from Constantinople and the Western Powers; but any inference from this that they would welcome an alliance with the Turks and the Western Powers, is quite erroneous: they by no means desire the vicinity of the latter, which they would regard as equally obnoxious and fatal to them with that of the Russians. Indeed they might probably in the end agree even better with the Russians. Whether Schamyl himself would consent to a co-operation with the Western Powers appears, from his character, very problematical: he desires to rule,

but undoubtedly not to be subject to the Sultan. Whether one of the many emissaries sent to him through Circassia has really ever reached him, is very doubtful : they have generally been taken prisoners, robbed, nay murdered, by the Circassians.

CHAPTER XII.

CIVIL AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION.—REFORMS IN TURKEY,
 PERSIA, AND EGYPT.—MEHEMET ALI.—EUROPEAN DIPLO-
 MACY.—SCHAMYL'S POLICY.—HIS PRETENDED INSPIRATION.
 —BLOOD REVENGE.—CODE OF LAWS.—STEPS TO PARADISE.

GREAT as Schamyl's military exploits undoubtedly are, his talents for organization and administration surpass even these. Since he has had the command of his country, he has organized a government complete in itself, an admirable military constitution, and a regular legislation, which has now stood the test of many years.

The forms of the civil and military constitution in the Mohammedan States are based upon the laws of their religion, modified only according to the national customs and bias of Arabs, Persians, and Turks. Since Mohammedanism has declined, and its spiritual power has waned, these forms of government have shared the general decay. The bond which still holds these States

together is that element of nationality and community of faith, which becomes especially powerful in a war like the present. It must not be forgotten, that the Arabs, Persians, and Turks, with their Caucasian admixture of blood, are akin to the noblest and most highly-gifted nations. Hence we see the fact, inexplicable to many, that, whilst Turkey is scarcely able to uphold itself longer as a State, yet in the camp the Empire of the Turks always exhibits life and vigour. The Mohammedan rulers have long seen and recognized the superiority of the Christian States; but they have fallen into the error of imagining that this arises merely from outward forms, and that it only requires these forms to be imitated and adopted, to annul this superiority of the Christian nations.

Half a century ago an attempt was made to introduce into Turkey European institutions: the Sultan Selim paid with his life for the attempt. Since then an amazing change has taken place, especially in the new military organization. It is undeniable, that the European armies of Turkey have shown great skill and valour in the present war: whether this is attributable to the reform in their organization, to European in-

struction and command, or to the inherent martial spirit of the nation, which readily adopts these improvements, is a question we must leave.

In Persia similar attempts at reform have been made, and partially carried out, but with much less success, probably because the warlike spirit of the nation has almost become extinct.

This reform in the system of organization has been pursued the furthest in the Arabian branch of Mohammedanism. In Egypt Mehemet Ali has remodelled not only his army, but the whole civil government, entirely upon a European system ; and, ostensibly at least, his measures were crowned with success ; but, although apparently dictated by an enlightened policy, this new system was grafted upon a spirit of the most fearful caprice and despotism, certainly carried out with wonderful energy. Had he succeeded in overturning the empire of the Os-
mans, and in founding a new Arabian one at Constantinople, he might probably have averted for a time the downfall of Mohammedanism. A vigorous Oriental empire of this character might perhaps have satisfied the demands of a European state policy, to which such an empire (at the present moment that of Turkey) seems to be

a bitter necessity. But the timid European diplomacy, which shrank from any departure from the beaten tract, and strove to uphold the tottering existence of Turkey at all hazards, in order to adhere to the traditions of the past, prevented this ; it annihilated the fleets of the Viceroy, repulsed his army from Syria, and thus destroyed his power of conquest.* Such favourable opportunities, once lost, never return ; and the diplomacy of Europe now contemplates the chances of the future, blind to the issue of events and powerless to control them.

* In saying this, we protest expressly against the charge of partisanship. In the victory of Christianity we recognize merely the point in the world's history to which all lines of fate converge : Mohammedanism, in all its phases, must die out, when it has fulfilled the purpose of its mission. We speak here simply in the spirit of the temporary state policy of Europe. Austria, France, and England viewed the matter differently ; and instead of securing, in a powerful and well-organized empire under Mehemet Ali, a really efficient bulwark against Russia, they preferred propping up the miserable Government of Turkey. Russia alone acted at that time with wisdom and consistency : to her the preservation of a Turkish empire was a political necessity,—nay, it is so even at the present moment ! and if “the sick man” could, by any means, be kept from dying, no Power would even now do more to effect this than Russia herself. But should he die, in spite of all the efforts of England and France, the question of inheritance arises—what then ?

Schamyl likewise is perfectly aware that a Power like Russia cannot be opposed with any hope of success, or even safety, except by the aid of organization and discipline; and he appears to have established such, both civil and military, fulfilling all the requirements of his position, with remarkable genius, deep intelligence, and persevering energy.

Schamyl has formed an entirely different conception of his task to Mehemet Ali's: instead of, like the latter, copying servilely the European forms and civil institutions, and military discipline, he founds all his institutions upon a religious and national basis, such as he finds existing, and he adopts European forms and practices only as far as they appear to him needful, practical, and applicable.

The whole of Schamyl's social and civil organization rests on a theocratic basis. Allah has set the Caucasus as a barrier or protecting wall to the Empire of the Faithful, against Gog and Magog, against the Unbelievers; there he has planted the mountain races, and appointed them the watchful guards of this frontier defence; their duty it is to combat to the last with the Unbelievers, whose hostility and attacks grow ever

fiercer as the world's judgement approaches. But as the Khalif is weak, and surrounded by traitors and infidels, Allah, to meet this danger, has raised up prophets and leaders of the holy war. Kazi Moollah was the first consecrated and appointed to this task, and through him Allah made known his will; Gamzad Beg succeeded, and the office has now devolved on Schamyl. To these men the Faithful are bound to render unconditional obedience.

Schamyl declares openly and solemnly to the Murids and the people, that he has direct revelations from Allah and the Prophets, and at important moments receives their immediate commands. Before engaging in any great undertaking, Schamyl prepares himself by religious practices; he retires into a cavern, or shuts himself up closely: no one is allowed to approach him. For three weeks he remains in seclusion, praying and fasting, and absorbed in the study of the holy books. On the last evening he summons the leaders and Moollahs, and communicates to them the revelations and commands which Mohammed, under the form of a dove, has imparted to him. He then goes forth among the people, who are collected in large multitudes before

his courtyard; he prays, recites verses from the Koran, and declares with a loud voice what Allah and the Prophet have commanded. The people all sing a solemn hymn, the men draw their daggers, and renew their oath to remain true to the Faith, and to extirpate the Unbelievers. They then all disperse, crying aloud, "Allah is great, Mohammed is his first Prophet, and Schamyl his second."*

The prophetic mission of Kazi Moollah underwent continual fluctuations of opinion among the people; sometimes they believed on him, at other times doubted, according as he was fortunate or unsuccessful. He was nearly deserted toward the close of his life, and it was only his death that fully confirmed the belief in his mission.

The belief in the prophetic character of Schamyl grew up at first gradually, but it is now perfectly established. Even under defeat no one has dared to ascribe any blame to him; the disaster is attributed to the fault of others, and regarded as a trial inflicted by Allah upon the people. At the present moment there is probably not one of the Faithful in the Caucasus who doubts that Schamyl has the mission of an

* Compare Bodenstedt, p. 487.

inspired prophet from Allah. In consequence, he everywhere meets with unreserved obedience, and has performed incredible exploits.

The old sectarian hatred between Sunnites and Shiites has been completely appeased by Schamyl in the Caucasus: the new doctrines, the new revelations, which the lips of the Prophet proclaim, have dissolved the old disputes, and reconciled all differences of opinion.

There are more than fifty peoples in the Caucasus, all differing in origin, language, manners, character, and modes of thought; and these races are divided into innumerable clans. They have always remained perfectly independent, one of another: they were either democracies, or aristocracies under the rule of petty hereditary native princes. No power has ever been able to establish here a monarchy. Although some of these mountain tribes have been occasionally in a certain kind of dependence on the adjacent nations, yet the entire population have never formed an integral part of any monarchy. At the present time all appear bound together by a powerful religious fervour, a common faith in the Prophet, and a deep hatred against the Unbelievers. Here may perhaps be the germ of a future

monarchy under the Prophet. It is true that such a supposition rests upon the head of a single man : at Schamyl's death, probably all this organization and union would fall to the ground: hitherto no one, except him, has appeared among these Mountaineers possessing similar commanding talents.

Schamyl has even succeeded in greatly restricting the fearful custom of blood-revenge, which for centuries has cursed all the peoples and races of the Caucasus ; this he has effected, by referring disputes of this kind to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Moollah ; and even here, where formerly only anger and passion ruled, ready obedience has for the most part succeeded. If Schamyl once puts down the custom of blood-revenge, he is undisputed master of the Caucasus.

It is said that Schamyl has published a general code of laws,—of course a paraphrase of the Koran,—which prescribes an infinite variety of punishments. Most of these are money fines ; for instance in the case of theft, a fine of double the value of the thing stolen,—one-half the sum to be given to the person robbed, as an indemnification, and the other half to be paid into the

military chest. Severer punishments of imprisonment are also inflicted, and in cases of murder, treachery, and violation of faith, death ; executions take place by the sword, either without loss of honour, or accompanied by a sentence of full ignominy. In the first case the criminal sits down unbound, bares his neck and breast himself, says his prayers, bows his head forward, and thus receives the fatal stroke. In the second instance, the executioner strips his neck and bends his head forcibly to the block. A Murid convicted of treachery is shot or stabbed.

In accordance with the doctrines of Soofism, which they have adapted to their state, the Believers constitute four steps of the ladder which conducts to Allah and Paradise. Upon the highest or fourth step stands alone the Murshid, the representative of Allah and Mohammed : this grade can only be occupied by *one* person. Upon the next lower, or third step, stand the representatives of the Murshid. On the second stand the disciples of the Faith, the Murids. On the lowest or first step stand the people, the Believers, who adhere simply to the outward practices and religious observances ; whilst the three others participate in the theosophic doctrines and their

mysteries, according to certain relations and gradations.

Schamyl has divided his realm into provinces, and these into governments under Naibs. How many there are of these we do not know. Every five Naibdoms form a province, over which is placed a head, who unites both the spiritual and temporal power. The Naibs declare the law, decide disputes, watch over the fulfilment of the outward religious observances (the Shariat), raise the taxes, and summon the men to war.

Schamyl has founded a regular system of taxation; whereas in former times, according to the ancient Caucasian customs, the revenues of Kazi Moollah and Gamzad Beg consisted only of a share of the spoils of war, namely a fifth part. The tithe of each harvest was first and generally introduced as an impost for the Murshid.

All the taxes and presents made to the mosques and places of pilgrimage, which formerly the Moollahs and Dervishes received, now go into the common chest, for the support of the holy war. The Moollahs receive a fixed payment, and the Dervishes are either enlisted in the army, or must beg. In some wealthy Naibdoms a poll-

tax of one silver rouble for each family has been introduced ; in the other districts produce to that amount is received.

The property of those who fall in battle is given to the military chest, if there are no direct heirs.

The military organization, in its general features, is the following.

Every Naibdom maintains three hundred armed horsemen. Every ten houses in an Aoul furnish one horseman : the family and house from which he is taken is free of tax. Equipment and maintenance are found by the nine other houses. All men, from fifteen to thirty years of age, are called upon to be exercised in arms, and must in time of need, if the country is attacked, enter Schamyl's army. The warrior chosen and equipped by every ten houses, then takes the command of the rest of the militia from those families. The strictest discipline prevails in the army, and disobedience is punished with death.

Schamyl has a select body-guard of (formerly) a thousand men, the Murtosigators, whom he himself chooses from the Murids. Valour, fidelity, ardour for the doctrines of Muridism, are their necessary qualifications. They undertake arduous

duties, practise temperance, continency, and the strictest observance of the Shariat (prayer and ceremonial duties), are distinguished by their zeal for the spread of their religion, and the most unreserved obedience. In return, they are richly rewarded, and enjoy the highest honours and the greatest consideration from the people. They are free to retire after serving a certain number of years, but this is not usual. Every ten men have a leader, and ten such bands a captain. Up to this time there has never been a traitor found among the Murtosigators. Their unparalleled ardour united with their coolness, is the terror of their enemies: never has one of them fallen alive into the hands of the foe. These men are the true support of Schamyl's power,—in war, his arm and his shield,—in peace, the inspired apostles of his doctrines,—everywhere the executors of his commands.

Most remarkable are the orders and decorations which Schamyl has introduced since 1840, in outward appearance an imitation of the European and Russian; possibly however a mysterious meaning may be attached to them, as is so frequently the case in the East. The Orders are granted for distinguished bravery and severe

wounds, and give pecuniary advantages. There are three gradations : the lowest order is a round silver medal, the second a triangular order, and the third consists of silver epaulets : this last confers princely rank.

In contrast to these military rewards are certain punishments. Cowardice in battle is marked by a piece of felt tied round the arm or sown to the back : a man thus disgraced generally soon seeks and finds his death in battle.

THE END.





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